TWASINTA'S SEMINOLES;

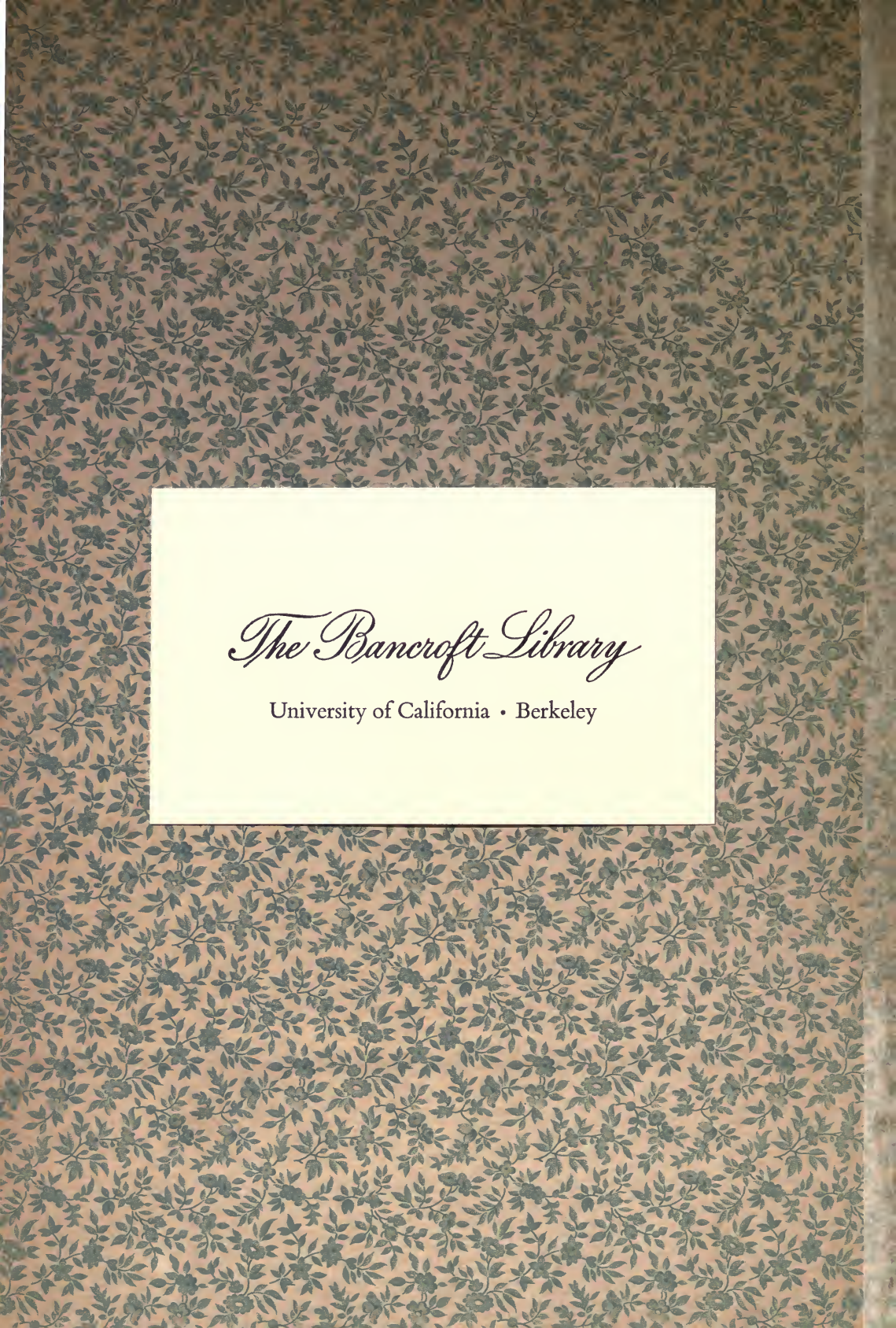
OR,

RAPE OF FLORIDA,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

ALBERY A. WHITMAN.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Albery A. Whitman

TWASINTA'S SEMINOLES;

OR,

RAPE OF FLORIDA.

BY

ALBERY A. WHITMAN.

THIRD EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE HONORABLE CHARLES ROBINSON, EX-GOVERNOR OF KANSAS,

"TWASINTA'S SEMINOLES; OR, RAPE OF FLORIDA" IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED AS A SLIGHT TOKEN

OF ESTEEM FOR HIS LIFE-LONG

FRIENDSHIP TO MY

PEOPLE.

ALBERY A. WHITMAN.

PREFACE.

The cordial reception given the first edition of this poem by the American people, prompts me to change my former address, by adding a word to the public.

Youth thinks extravagantly and often speaks more so, but sober experience comes on to correct us. I have found that I need not quarrel and that complaining is unmanly. Going among the people for myself, I have seen that the whites have cheerfully vied with my own race in putting me before the public. Kindness is a law unto herself, and in her dominions all subjects are willing. She opens her hand with benefits, and forgets not the humble in passing. This beautiful truth has been taught me by the many who have heard my singing. The wise, the good, and great have heard me, and said that they heard a poet. And saying so much of me, an obscure young man, it causes me to hope afresh, and feel that life is worth living.

I am in active sympathy with the progressive colored man. I have a mind to think that he has a calling among his fellow-men. It may be noticed here that I use the words, colored man, instead of the word Negro. I do this because *my* feelings decide in favor of *colored* man by a vote of eight to seven. I am in active sympathy with America's *coming* colored man. I have yielded to the firm belief that he has a future. I abhor the doctrine that he is but a cipher in the world's greatness — a captive in the meshes of dominating influences. I abhor it because it is arrogantly asserted on the one hand while it is too often tacitly admitted on the other. Yet I confess that living instances of real merit *only* will correct the world's judgment and force its respect. To this end I have laid out my life. Modest enough to be patient, I am not too tame to assert that I have some hope of ultimately reaching the ears of my countrymen.

I am a colored man, and as such, I accept the situation, and enter the lists with poised lance. I disdain to whine over my "previous condition." I despise the doctrine of the *slave's allowance*. Petition and complaint are the language of imbecility and cowardice — the evidences of that puerile fear which extinguishes the soul. The time has come when all "Uncle Toms" and "Topsies" ought to die. *Goody goodness* is a sort of man worship: ignorance is its inspiration, fear its ministering spirit, and beggary its inheritance. Genius, in a right good soul, is the highest impress of the Divine Image on clay. It alone can have the respect of God and man. Dumb endurance is the stamp of heroism and mortal greatness. To it, all earth is place, all time opportunity, heaven companionship and God a friend.

As for myself, I was "bred to the plow." Amid the rugged hills, along the banks of Green River in Kentucky, I enjoyed the inestimable blessings of cabin life and hard work during the whole of my early days. I was in bondage, — *I never was a slave*, — the infamous laws of a savage despotism took my substance — what of that? Many a man has lost all he had, excepting his manhood. Adversity is the school of heroism, endurance the majesty of man and hope the torch of high aspirations. Acquainted with adversity, I am flattered of hope and comforted by endurance.

As to the merits of this poem, I shall not venture a word. If merit there be, it will be found. If none, palliating words will not soften criticism. I simply present Atlassa, Ewald and Palmecho, with their associates, to the public, and "bow out."

Of poetry in general, however, I will say: I am not of those "who think a poet and a bell-ringer to be equals." I do not believe poetry is on the decline. I do not believe that human advancement extinguishes the torch of sentiment. I cannot think that money-getting is the whole business of man. Rather am I convinced that the world is approaching a poetical revolution. The subtle evolution of thought must yet be expressed in song. "Poesy," says one, "is the language of the imagination." Campbell said, "it is the eloquence of truth." As we understand it to-day, I think poetry is

the language of universal sentiment. Torch of the unresting mind, she kindles in advance of all progress. Her waitings are on the threshold of the infinite, where, beckoning man to listen, she interprets the leaves of immortality. Her voice is the voice of Eternity dwelling in all great souls. Her aims are the inducements of heaven, and her triumphs the survival of the Beautiful, the True, and the Good. In her language there is no mistaking of that liberal thought which is the health of mind. A secret interpreter, she waits not for data, phenomena and manifestations, but anticipates and spells the wishes of Heaven.

Poesy is fair, and to her all *things* are fair; the rain prophesies, and seasons and soil give testimony that God is a friend of all His creatures, and man is His delight. In great forests she sees temples reared and hears the sounds of praise. The dumb rocks are silent, but express all real prayer.

Poesy is free, and knows not of hire. Beauty is her inspiration, — her creed is Truth, and Goodness her Divinity. The first she praises, magnifies the second, and adores the third. And to end all, in her divine right a teacher, she brings benefits even to the lowly.

Of myself in this matter, I will add: I began to *try* sayings of poetry before I knew what writing was. Before I could write a letter, I was trying to scribble down what the birds and bees and cows were saying and what even the dumb rocks were *thinking*. Nature has ever had a speech for me, and in listening to her voice, lies my satisfaction. Finally: in essaying the "stately verse," *mastered* by *only* Spenser, Byron, and a very few other great poets, I may seem to have "rushed in where angels fear to tread." To this view of the matter, I will say by way of defense: some one of my race is sure to do everything that any one else has ever done, and as none of my race have ever executed a poem in the "stately verse," I simply *venture in*.

ALBERY A. WHITMAN.

TWASINTA'S SEMINOLES;

OR,

RAPE OF FLORIDA.

CANTO I.

INVOCATION.

I.

The poet hath a realm within and throne,
And in his own soul singeth his lament.
A comer often to the world unknown —
A flaming minister to mortals sent;
In an apocalypse of sentiment
He shows in colors true the right or wrong,
And lights the soul of virtue with content;
Oh! could the world without him please us long?
What truth is there that lives and does not live in song?

II.

"The stuff's in him of robust manliness,
He is a poet, singing more by ear,
Than note." His great heart filled with tenderness,
Thus spoke the patriarch bard of Cedarmere
Of me, who dwelt in a most obscure sphere;
For I was in the tents of bondage when
The muse inspired and ere my song grew clear,
The graceful Bryant called his fellow-men
To mark what in my lay seemed pleasing to him then.

III.

O! shade of our departed Sire of song!
If what to us is dim be clear to thee,
Hear while my yet rude numbers flow along!
If spirit may a mortal's teacher be,
Stand thou near by and guidance offer me!
That, like thy verses, clear as summer blue, —
Bright mirrors of the peaceful and the free,
Reflecting e'er the good, the great and true, —
So mine may be, while *I* my pleasing task pursue.

IV.

Say then, of that too soon forgotten race
That flourished once, but long has been obscure
In Florida, and where the seas embrace
The Spanish isles; say if e'er lives more pure
Warmed veins, or patriots could more endure
Around the altars of their native bourne!
Say, when their flow'ry landscapes could allure,
What peaceful season did to them return,
And how requited labor filled his golden urn?

V.

How sweet their little fields of golden corn!
How pleasure smiled o'er all the varying scene!
How, 'mid her dewy murmurs dreamt the morn,
As Summer lingered in the deep serene!
How nibbling flocks spread on the hillsides green,

And cattle herded in the vales below;
And how wild meadows stretched in bloom-sweet sheen,
Beneath unconquered shades, where lovers go
When comes the evening star above the dark to glow!

VI.

In this delightful valley of the isle,
Where dwelt the proud Maroon, were not deeds done
Which roused the Seminole and fierce exile
To more than savage daring? Here begun
The valiant struggles of a forest son;
And tho' by wrong's leagued numbers overborne,
His deeds of love and valor for him won
The envied wreath by heroes only worn,
And which from manhood's brow oppression ne'er hath torn!

I.

The negro slave by Swanee river sang;
Well-pleased he listened to his echoes ringing;
For in his heart a secret comfort sprang,
When Nature seemed to join his mournful singing.
To mem'ry's cherished objects fondly clinging;
His bosom felt the sunset's patient glow,
And spirit whispers into weird life springing,
Allured to worlds he trusted yet to know,
And lightened for awhile life's burdens here below.

II.

The drowsy dawn from many a low-built shed,
Beheld his kindred driven to their task;
Late evening saw them turn with weary tread
And painful faces back; and dost thou ask
How sang these bondmen? how their suff'rings mask?
Song is the soul of sympathy divine,
And hath an inner ray where hope may bask;
Song turns the poorest waters into wine,
Illumines exile hearts and makes their faces shine.

III.

The negro slave by Swanee river sang,
There soon the human hunter rode along;
And eagerly behind him came a gang
Of hounds and men, — the bondman hushed his song —
Around him came a silent, list'ning throng;
"Some runaway!" he muttered; said no more,
But sank from view the growing corn among;
And though deep pangs his wounded spirit bore,
He hushed his soul, and went on singing as before.

IV.

So fared the land where slaves were groaning yet —
Where beauty's eyes must feed the lusts of men!
'Tis as when horrid dreams we half forget,
Would then relate, and still relate again —
Ah! cold abhorrence hesitates my pen!
The heavens were sad, and hearts of men were faint;
Philanthropy implored and wept, but then
The wrong, unblushing trampled on Restraint,
While feeble Law sat by and uttered no complaint.

V.

"Fly and be free!" a whisper comes from heaven,
"Thy cries are heard!" the bondman's up and gone!
To grasp the dearest boon to mortals given,
He frantic flies, unaided and alone.
To him the red man's dwellings are unknown;
But he can crave the freedom of his race,
Can find his harvests in the desert sown,
And in the cypress forest's dark embrace
A pathway to his lonely habitations trace.

VI.

The sable slave, from Georgia's utmost bounds,
Escapes for life into the Great Wahoo.
Here he has left afar the savage hounds
And human hunters that did late pursue;
There in the hommock darkly hid from view,
His wretched limbs are stretched awhile to rest,
Till some kind Seminole shall guide him thro'
To where by hound nor hunter more distrest,
He in a flow'ry home, shall be the red man's guest.

VII.

If tilled profusion does not crown the view,
Nor wide-ranged farms begirt with fences spread;
The cultivated plot is well to do;
And where no slave his groaning life has led,
The songs of plenty fill the lowliest shed.

Who could wish more, when Nature, always green,
Brings forth fruit-bearing woods and fields of bread?
Wish more, where cheerful valleys bloom between,
And herds browse on the hills, where winter ne'er has been?

VIII.

Shall high-domed mosque or steepled cathedral,
Alone to man his native land endear?
Shall pride's palatial pomp and ease withal,
The only shrines of patriotism rear?
Oh! who can limit adoration's sphere,
Or check the inspiring currents of the soul? —
Who hush the whispers of the vernal year,
Or press the sons of freedom from their goal?
Or who from Nature wrest the mystery of control!

IX.

Plebeian, Savage, Sage, or lord or fiend,
Man hath of justice and of right a cause.
Prior to all that e'er has contravened,
Or e'en to man's existence, justice was.
Right would be right amid the wreck of laws:
'Tis so, and all ordaining Nature gives
Somewhere to live, to every child she has;
She gives, and to her bosom each receives,
Inducing it to love the spot whereon it lives.

X.

Fair Florida! whose scenes could so enhance —
Could in the sweetness of the earth excel!
Wast thou the Seminole's inheritance?
Yea, it was thee he loved, and loved so well!
'Twas 'neath thy palms and pines he strove to dwell.
Not savage, but resentful to the knife,
For thee he sternly struggled — sternly fell!
Thoughtful and brave, in long uneven strife,
He held the verge of manhood mid the hights of life.

XI.

A wild-born pride endeared him to thy soil!
Where roamed his herds without a keeper's care —
Where man knew not the pangs of slavish toil!
And where thou didst not blooming pleasures spare,
But well allotted each an ample share,
He loved to dwell: Oh! isn't the goal of life
Where man has plenty and to man is fair?
When free from avarice's pinch and strife,
Is earth not like the Eden-home of man and wife?

XII.

If earth were freed from those who buy and sell,
It soon were free from most, or all its ills;
For that which makes it, most of all, a hell,
Is what the stingy purse of Fortune fills;
The man who blesses and the man who kills,
Oft have a kindred purpose after all, —
A purpose that will ring in Mammon's tills;
And that has ne'er unheeded made a call,
Since Eve and Adam trod the thistles of their Fall.

XIII.

What meant the actions of the great and good—
The Christ and His Apostles — holy men!
Why wandered they about in solitude,
Despising what the world called greatness then?
Why shun the num'rous city's places, when
Eternal themes their warning tongues inspired—
Why, but to reach Edenic source again
In nature? Why, if not that they aspired
To tarry till seraphic touch and flame had fired.

XIV.

Their hearts to work man's restoration? This,
This is the voice of Time unfolding truth!
Oh! does not Nature teach us primal bliss?
Who has not felt her lessons in his youth?
And having felt, who can forget forsooth!
The voice of birds, the toil and hum of bees,
And air all filled with sounds, sweet or uncouth,
Dark hights, majestic woods and rolling seas
Have been my teachers, and my teachers still be these!

XV.

Have I not seen the hills of Candahar
Clothed in the fury of a thunder storm?
When Majesty rolled in His cloud-dark car —
Wreathed His dread brow with lightning's livid form,
And with a deluge robed His threat'ning arm!
Not seen, when night fled His terrific feet,
The great deep rose to utter forth alarm,
The hills in dreadful hurry rushed to meet,
And rocking mountains started from their darkened seat!

XVI.

In happy childhood I have even loved
To sport the wild, and in the front and face
Of dreadest Nature, watch the storm unmoved,
That tore the oak tree from its ancient place
And took the hilltops in its dark embrace;
And then I've loved the pleasing after-view —
The quiet valleys spanned with light and grace—
The watery field, replete with life anew,
And sunset robing earth, in love's sublimest hue.

XVII.

Thus, when afar the wide Bahamas shone, —
In lucent stillness gleamed the sunset sea —
When day's last rim sank like a molten zone,
Emblaz'ning in Omnific heraldry
The far-off crag and latest mountain tree;
Thus, on a strand dividing worlds I've stood,
Till, touched by the dark wand of mystery,
I felt the brow of night, and earth imbued
With dread emotions of a great eternal Good.

XVIII.

Upon the shells by Carribea's wave
I've heard the anthems of the mighty sea;
Heard there the dark pines that their voices gave,
And heard a stream denote its minstrelsy—
How sweet, *all* lonely, was it there to be!
The stars were bright, the moon was up and clear;
But, when I thought of those who once were free,
And came at wonted times to worship there;
The sea's deep voice grew sad and claimed of me a tear!

XIX.

Oh! sing it in the light of freedom's morn,
Tho' tyrant wars have made the earth a grave;
The good, the great, and true, are, if so, born,
And so with slaves, *chains do not make the slave!*
If high-souled birth be what the mother gave,—
If manly birth, and manly to the core, —
Whate'er the test, the man will he behave!
Crush him to earth and crush him o'er and o'er,
A man he'll rise at last and meet you as before.

XX.

So with our young Atlassa, hero-born, —
Free as the air within his palmy shade,
The nobler traits that do the man adorn,
In him were native: Not the music made
In Tampa's forests or the everglade
Was fitter than in this young Seminole
Was the proud spirit which did life pervade,
And glow and tremble in his ardent soul —
Which, lit his inmost-self, and spurned all mean control.

XXI.

Than him none followed chase with nimbler feet,
None readier in the forest council rose;
To speak for war, e'er sober and discreet,
In battle stern, but kind to fallen foes;
He led the *charge*, but halted, — slow to close
The vexed retreat: In front of battle he,
Handsome and wild his proud form would expose;
But in the cheering van of victory,
Gentle and brave he was the real chief to see.

XXII.

Lo! mid a thousand warriors where he stands,
Pride of all hearts and idol of his race!
Look how the chieftains of his war-tried bands
Kindle their courage in his valiant face!
And as his lips in council open, trace
How deep suspense her earnest furrows makes
On ev'ry brow! How rings the forest-place
With sounding cheers! when native valor wakes
His dark intrepid eyes, and he their standard takes!

XXIII.

Proud spirit of the hommock-bounded home
Well wast thy valor like a buckler worn!
And when the light of other times shall come, —
When history's muse shall venture to adorn
The brow of all her children hero-born, —
When the bold truth to man alike assigns
The place he merits, of no honor shorn;
The wreath shall be, that thy proud brow entwines,
As green as Mickasukie's everlasting pines!

XXIV.

Well bled thy warriors at their leader's side!
Well stood they the oppressor's wasting fire;
For years sweep on, and in their noiseless tide,
Bear down the mem'ries of the past! The dire
And gloomful works of tyrants shall expire,
Till naught survives, save truth's great victories;

The sable slave, from Georgia's utmost bounds,
Escapes for life into the Great Wahoo.
Here he has left afar the savage hounds
And human hunters that did late pursue;
There in the hommock darkly hid from view,
His wretched limbs are stretched awhile to rest;
Till some kind Seminole shall guide him thro'
To where by hound nor hunter more distrest,
He in a flow'ry home, shall be the red man's guest.

Twasinta's Seminoles; or, Rape of Florida.— Page 8, Stanza v.

Then shall the voyager on his way aspire
To ponder what vast wrecks of time he sees,
And on Fame's temple columns read their memories!

XXV.

Not so with Osceola, thy dark mate;
The hidden terror of the hommock, he
Sat gloomily and nursed a bitter hate,—
The white man was his common enemy—
He rubbed the burning wounds of injury,
And plotted in his dreadful silent gloom;
As dangerous as a rock within the sea.
And when in fray he showed his fearless plume,
Revenge made sweet the blows that dealt the white man's doom.

XXVI.

The pent-up wrath that rankled in his breast,
O'er smould'ring embers shot a lurid glare,
And wrongs that time itself had not redrest,
In ghost-like silence stalked and glimmered there.
And from the wizard caverns of despair,
Came voice and groan, reminding o'er and o'er
The outrage on his wife so young and fair;
And so, by heaven and earth and hell he swore
To treat in council with the white man never more.

XXVII.

Such were the chiefs who led their daring braves
In many a battle nobly lost or won,
And consecrated Mickasukie's graves
To that sweet province of the summer sun!
And still shall history forgetful run?
Shall legend too be mute? then Poesy,
Divinest chronicler of deeds well done,
From the blest shrine and annals of the free,
Sing forth thy praise and man shall hear attentively.

XXVIII.

The poorest negro coming to their shore,
To them was brother—their own flesh and blood,—
They sought his wretched manhood to restore,—
They found his hidings in the swampy wood,
And brought him forth—in arms before him stood,—
The citizens of God and sovran earth,—
They shot straight forward looks with flame imbued,
Till in him manhood sprang, a noble birth,
And warrior-armed he rose to all that manhood's worth.

XXIX.

On the dark front of battle often seen,
Or holding dang'rous posts through dreadful hours,—
In ranks obedient, in command serene,
His comrades learn to note the tested powers
Which prove that valor is not always ours,
Be whomsoever we: A common race
Soon from this union flows—soon rarest flowers
Bloom out and smile in beauty's blending grace,
And rivals they become for love's sublimest place.

XXX.

The native warrior leads his ebon maid,
The dark young brave his bloom-hued lover wins;
And where soft spruce and willows mingle shade,
Young life mid sunniest hours its course begins:
All Nature pours its never-ending dins
In groves of rare-hued leaf without'n end,—
'Tis as if Time, forgetting Eden's sins,
Relents, and spirit visitors descend
In love's remembered tokens, earth once more to blend.

XXXI.

The sleepy mosses wave within the sun,
And on the dark elms climbs the mistletoe;
Great tangled vines through pendant branches run,
And hang their purple clusters far below;
The old pines wave their summits to and fro,
And dancing to the earth, impatient light
Touches the languid scene, to quickly go,
Like some gay spirit in its sunny plight,
That, visiting the earth, did glance and take its flight.

XXXII.

Here lapped in Sylvia's all-composing shade,
Reposed a lake beneath the thick-wood hill
Whose shady base, by night and day was made
The scene of trystings: Pining there until
The shadow crept upon the midnight sill,
The love-sick youth spoke vows unto the moon;

And pond'ring by the waters lone and still,
The old man conned his lifetime's Afternoon,
And turned the pleasing view, "I shall be going soon."

XXXIII.

"Come now, my love, the moon is on the lake:
Upon the waters is my light canoe;
Come with me, love, and gladsome oars shall make
A music on the parting wave for you, —
Come o'er the waters deep and dark and blue;
Come where the lilies in the marge have sprung,
Come with me, love, for oh, my love is true!"
This is the song that on the lake was sung,
The boatman sang it over when his heart was young.

XXXIV.

The boatman's song is hushed; the night is still,
Still as the vault of heaven, — a plashy oar
Starts from the shadows by the darkling hill,
And softly dips towards the farther shore;
Now stops, now dips again — is heard no more.
But follow in the nook by yonder tree, —
Where spouts a tiny stream with fretish roar,
His light canoe is riding noiselessly —
A Chieftain's light canoe, in which his maid you see.

XXXV.

Ah! how her wild dark wealth of tresses spread
Below the arm that round her partly lies!
And as she leans her half reluctant head,
See how intense the glances that she tries!
Her very soul is mounting to her eyes
Lit with the fires of her proud ancestry;
And as her chieftain hears her faint replies,
How his high spirit doth adore to sue
His princess-child, the bright star of his destiny!

XXXVI.

"A maid from islands in a far far sea,
Came to our shores, upon a day, a day;
A beauty fair, a beauty fair was she,
And took our young Chief's heart away, away;
Tho' all the world could not we heard him say.
And oh! we love our chieftain and his maid,
And so will we, and so will we for aye!"
This was the night-song on the lake delayed,—
The boatman sang it over in the willows' shade.

XXXVII.

The scout at eve to Mickasukie came;
The stories of Twasinta were his boast,—
A stately chief, Palmecho was his name,
Had numerous herds and fields, and had a host
Of servants in the vale from Tampa's coast.
A proud descendant of a house of Spain,
Distinguished as a patron gen'rous most,
Whoever sought his roof, sought not in vain,
And he who tarried once must shelter there again.

XXXVIII.

What if his child, of Maroon mother born,
Were not so white as fancy's *marble art?*
What if Care's tedious skill did not adorn?—
A native air did nobler charms impart;
For beauty blossomed wildly in her heart:
The rosebud's youngest tinge was in her cheek.
And her dark restless eyes could dance and start
As if the sparkling sense were wont to speak,
And hurl the insult back that woman's heart is weak.

XXXIX.

Lo! where yon age-brown mansion meets your eyes!
The brook below it winds how placidly!
A house of proud ancestral families,
How venerable is its history!
Whilom here met the sons of liberty;
The counsel and the courage of a time
When civilization, crossing o'er the sea,
Courted the perils of an unknown clime,
And reared the Cross of Spain to mark conquests sublime.

XL.

But of thy conquests, what remains for thee,
Except our sighs, thou proud but feeble Spain!
Thy flow'r and pride, Lisboa's chivalry,
Could not on these wild shores prolong thy reign.
For man waxed mighty and his God was Gain.
What if thy ancient mounts are castle-crowned?
What if thy vales do open to the main,
With cloisters in the distance time-embrowned?
These are but glimmerings of what was once renowned.

XLI.

Was not thy standard on these shores unfurled?—
Dominions named for thy "most Christian Queen"
The smile-provoking jest of a New World,
Whose sons in battle had victorious been,
O'er English vet'rans who had service seen?
Yea, when the lucre-loving Saxon drew
And fattened on the blood of slaves, I ween
Not much remained for errant hands to do,
Except to seize and hold the weak in bondage too!

XLII.

But Saragossa's flash o'er war's red field,
That nerved thy sons in havoc's revelry,
Held in young Ewald's softer glance concealed,
The dark springs of Astrusian chivalry, —
The lash-hid fires of valor's destiny —
Such eyes, the raging battle could not tame:
Yet they could shed the sweet light of a plea;
Enkindling in love's soft consenting flame,
A pride that nobly linked with beauty's charming name.

XLIII.

But we return; By Carribea's shore
And Tampa far, the maroon's race is run!
Gone are his children; him they call no more!
No more they gather in the setting sun
To join their pastimes, after toil is done!
Pathetic silence covers with a pall
The scene which all the living seem to shun,
And something seems to whisper, after all:
"And, ah! did such and *such* Twasinta's homes befall!"

XLIV.

Here many an exile found his long sought rest,
And built his cot in woods afar or lane.
Warm were his greetings for the weary guest,
Who wandered thither from the distant main;
And those who came were pressed to come again.
And for what news he gathered by the way,
Of frontier happens or of maid and swain
On foreign shores, — prolonged from day to day,
The total stranger might at will extend his stay.

XLV.

Here erst came exiles from their little farms,
To greet Palmecho and some honored guest;
Then ranged in rows, they sat with folded arms,
And heaven with rude, but fervent songs addrest:
A nameless longing kindled in each breast,
Gave soul to song, and as their voices rose,
And rolled and echoed dying in the West,
It seemed as if the dark hills did enclose
Unearthly choirs that chanted Nature to repose.

XLVI.

But where are they? Their voices are no more,
Where is the proud Palmecho? Where his child?
Ah! shall we seek them on a foreign shore,
Or follow where they wander in the wild?
Oh God! and hath our garments been defiled
With their shed blood; or what the frost and blight
That withered life where erst so sweet it smiled?
Let time's unerring finger point aright,
If Babylon be doomed, the truth should see the light.

XLVII.

Pass by their dwellings! they are desolate!
The dog has wandered there and howled and gone!
Rank weeds are growing o'er the broken gate,
And silence holds her dismal reign alone.
Ah! see what devastation there has done!
How o'er the scene a mournful spirit falls!
Here where a cheerful hearth whilom hast shone,
The dim noble burrows — sunken lean the walls,
And wizard voices whisper in the naked halls!

XLVIII.

Thus have we, Mickasukie, seen thy braves,
And too Twasinta, seen thy homes decline!
Thus have we found how yearns the poorest slaves
For freedom — how at patriotism's shrine,
The ardor of the exile is divine;
And now, that in the tide of years o'erflown,
There's scarcely left a trace of thee and thine,
We pause and sigh, mid wrecks that time hath strewn;
Of all the world has been how little now is known!

XLIX.

The plowman's furrow marks the crumbling field,
Where all unnoticed, war's rude weapons spread;

While neath his heedless step may lie concealed,
The strange and thrilling annals of the dead!
On some eventful day there may have bled,
Freemen as brave as Balaklava knew;
While there may rest some glorious leader's head,
Whose matchless valor to his standard drew
Brave hosts, who round their homes a wall of battle threw.

L.

Oh! would the muse of history rend the veil,
And bring her hidden instances to light;
How many standards of the proud would trail,
As thousands all unknown would rush in sight!
From steepled vale and celebrated hight!
Wherever civilization spreads her name,
Nations that perished in the scourge and blight
Of wars would rise, and in the book of fame,
Record their struggles and their heroes' deeds proclaim.

LI.

Not Albion's power nor Scotia's pride alone,
Could drum and slogan till the air should shriek
With martial praise,—nor with their lips of stone,
Could Tyber's Mistress and Illyrium speak
The godlike deeds of Roman and of Greek;
Nay, where the orange blows in yellow gold, —
Where eve is thoughtful and the morn is meek,—
Where stood the quick-eyed warrior dark and bold,
Applausing earth would hear the deeds of glory told.

LII.

Then from the lips of unforgetting time,
To hear what did Twasinta's homes befall
When war-storms overspread that peaceful clime —
To know what anguish did all hearts appall,
When separations brought death after all —
To hear how love can mortal dread unmask, —
To hear, and write at candor's earnest call,
That I may answer if mankind shall ask,
In truth — this be my aim, this be my further task.

CANTO II.

I.

The trump of fame is but the thunder's tone
Borne off forever, dying on the wind.
The glorious summits of the ages gone,
In dim remoteness scarcely lift the mind:
The mighty deeds that thrilled of yore, mankind,
Are now forgotten or but seldom told;
Th' unresting spirit e'er the new must find —
Old lands, old tongues, old heav'ns and earths — all old
Things pass away, as time displays the new unrolled.

II.

What is there now of gods and Mikadoos,
And dukes, and lords, or other titled things,
In this live age? — this busy world profuse
With evolution? — when each hour there springs
New truths, and new sensations mount their wings?
Inherent mention's scarcely worth the pains,
The world cares little whose grand sires were kings;
I'd rather be a squatter on the plains,
And know that I possessed industry, pluck and brains.

III.

Greatness, by nature, cannot be entailed;
It is an office ending with the man, —
Sage, hero, Savior, tho' the Sire be hailed,
The sun may reach obscurity in the van:
Sublime achievements know no patent plan,
Man's immortality's a book with seals,
And none but God shall open—none else can, —
But opened, it the mystery reveals, —
Manhood's conquest of man to heav'n's respect appeals.

IV.

Is manhood less because man's face is black?
Let thunders of the loosened seals reply!
Who shall the rider's restive steed turn back,
Or who withstand the arrows he lets fly,
Between the mountains of eternity?
Genius ride forth! thou gift and torch of heav'n!
The mastery is kindled in thine eye;
To conquest ride! thy bow of strength is giv'n —
The trampled hordes of caste before thee snall be driv'n!

V.

Who is't would beg? What man permission crave
To give his thoughts their scope and rightful reign?
Let him be cursed! a self-manacled slave!
He's a pollution to the mind's domain —
A Moral garbage scattered on the plain —
An execration of the world! — God's arm
Defend not him! Oh! if there is disdain
To freeze the bosom's every impulse warm,
I crave it for all who to Favor's alm's house swarm.

VI.

Shall thunders ask of man what time to beat
The march of clouds? Or oceans beg his leave
To rock their under-world's? In his dread seat,
Doth Blanc consider him? When did he weave
A mantle for the hurricane, or give
The Rockies leave to hold the dying Sun! —
Sooner all these — sooner an earthquake heave,
And sink earth back where broods oblivion,
Than God-giv'n mind submit for gyves to be put on.

VII.

'T'is hard to judge if hatred of one's race,
By those who deem themselves superior-born,
Be worse than that quiescence in disgrace,
Which only merits — and *should* only — scorn!
Oh! let me see the negro, night and morn,
Pressing and fighting in, for place and power!
If he a proud escutcheon would adorn,
All earth is place — all time th' auspicious hour,
While heaven leans forth to see, oh! can he quail or cower?

VIII.

Ah! I abhor his protest and complaint!
His pious looks and patience I despise!
He can't evade the test, disguised as saint,
The manly voice of freedom bids him rise,
And shake himself before Philistine eyes!
And, like a lion roused, no sooner than
A foe dare come, play all his energies,
And court the fray with fury if he can;
For hell itself respects a fearless manly man!

IX.

Negro, or Arab, Zulu if one choose,
Unmoved be thou reproached for all but fear!
By the unhindered waters learn to muse,
With nature's liberal voices in thy ear;
Dwell on her nobler aspects that appear,
And make companions of all one may find:
Go rove the mountain forests far and near,
And hear the laughter of the open wind;
Then ask, what earth affords like freedom of the mind!

X.

Be thine the shoulders that may bleed — not wince,
Tho' insolence in power lay on the lash.
Look retribution! court the worst nor flinch,
If thou must meet! — upon the insult gnash!
And let thy kindled courage on him flash;
For whom he cannot conquer — dare not kill —
In suff'ring dumb — in manly virtues rash —
Must with respect e'en tyrant bosoms fill,
So godlike is the man who is invincible!

XI.

I never was a slave — a robber took
My substance — what of that? The *law* my rights —
And that? I still was free and had my book —
All nature. And I learned from during hights
How silence is majestic, and invites
In admiration far beholding eyes!
And heaven taught me with her starry nights,
How deepest speech unuttered often lies,
And that Jehovah's lessons mostly He implies.

XII.

My birth-place where the scrub-wood thicket grows,
My mother bound, and daily toil my dower;
I envy not the halo title throws
Around the birth of any; place and power
May be but empty phantoms of an hour, —
For me, I find a more enduring bliss:
Rejoicing fields, green woods — the stream — the flower,
To me have speech, and born of God are his
Interpreters, proclaiming what true greatness is.

XIII.

Where'er I roam, in all the earth abroad,
I find *this* written in the human chart:
A love of Nature is the love of God,
And love of man 's the religion of the heart.
Man's right to think, in his majestic part
In his Creator's works — to others bless —

This is the point whence god-like actions start,
And open, conscientious manliness
Is the divinest image mortals can possess.

XIV.

Almighty fairness smiling heaven portends,
In sympathy the elements have tears;
The meekest flow'rs are their Creator's friends,
The hungry raven He in patience hears;
And e'en the sparrow's wishes reach His ears!
But when He treads the tyrant in His wrath,
And to crush wrong the horn of battle rears,
The pestilence goes forth on him who hath
Transgressed, and empires fall imploring in His path.

XV.

A god-like man is fair to fellow-men,
And gentleness is native in his soul!
He sees no fault in man till forced, and then
He wonders 't were not greater. He is whole
In valor mercy love and self-control.
Virtue is his religion — Liberty
His shrine — honest contentment is his goal
And sum of bliss, and his life aims to be
In nothing excellent, save that which leaves man free.

XVI.

I envy not the man whose want of brains
Supplies a roost for race-hate's filthy brood!
The little eminence his soul attains
Is more the pity when 'tis understood,
That he perhaps has done the best he could!
Tread not upon him just to see him squirm!
Pity forsooth! to crawl is his best good,
And 'tis his nat'ral way, I do affirm;
So, let him crawl his fill, he is a harmless worm!

XVII.

A lovely sunset fills the evening sky,
On glorified peaks the cloud-rims slowly fade,
Till comes the darkened east on quietly
Extending o'er the earth a solemn shade!
All things are silent, save the whispers made
By drowsy pines o'er where deep solitude
Rock cavern hill and valley doth pervade.
Now sinks a glimmering spirit in the wood,
And the dark brow of heav'n with myst'ry is imbued!

XVIII.

How changed the hour! How sweet to be alone
In meditations! 'Bove thee sweep thy sight
O'er the unconscious world, a baldic zone
Of heavenly sapphires burns! Behind the hight
The tranquil moon appears, and peerless night
Asserts her brilliant reign! Oh! mystery,
Interpreter of yon far mansions bright,
To find what their night cogitations be,
My soul would mount its eager way and dwell with thee!

XIX.

The portals of Thine upper House O God!
Portend a kindred of their worlds to me!
O! how the coming of Thy light abroad,
Doth lift my soul adoring up to Thee!
And is it not benign that I should see?
How could my heart in disobedience sink,
While round me rolls infinite harmony,
And thou dost woo my spirit forth to think,
And wait with Thine eternal sons upon the brink!

XX.

Thou awful One! Thy willing creature hear!
Help Thou my soul in patience here to wait;
And how soe'er to me Thou dost appear,
Lead me to look towards Thine upper gate!
Thy tender goodness is to me so great,
And Thou so near me hast Thy wonders brought.
Oh! help me love Thee more in Thine estate,
And love my fellow mortal as I ought!
Then grant that I come to Thine *upper* home of thought.

XXI.

When we behold yon citizens of heaven,
Oh! why should man oppress his brother here?
How sweet to think a Father's love hath given
To man the task to beautify this sphere,
And dwell in peace upon it everywhere!
The noblest hights e'er found by angels' ken,
The grandest vistas that to them appear,
Make not celestial joys so sweet as when
They see our earth a heaven — a brotherhood of men!

XXII.

Love in the forest, — this shall be my theme —
Was like a charming spirit in the wild
Where dwelt Atlassa. It to him did seem
That all the earth with tints of promise smiled.
And since he met Palmecho and his child,
The waves of Mickasukie sang more sweet.
The hoarse old pines did even speak more mild,
The wild flow'rs brightened in their mossy seat
And Ewald's whispers lingered in the wind's retreat.

XXIII.

No wonder he from forest sports should turn,
No wonder that he learned the Spanish tongue—
And to Twasinta went that he might learn:
Nor is it strange that, his rude tribes among,
The useful arts soon into being sprung.
The faithful exile in his fields was seen;
His herds were watched and numbered old and young;
With waving corn the valleys soon were green,
And pleasant houses reared where wigwams erst had been.

XXIV.

The warrior's blade now rusted in his halls,
The incantations of the seer were done;
Free hearts arose at labor's urgent calls,
And strong hands had their cheerful tasks begun:
Soon fields of plenty rose to greet the sun.
Instead of savage revels, now the feast
Of harvests was prolonged: and there was none
So proud as our young chief that wars had ceased,—
So plain is love the proof that man is not a beast.

XXV.

The faithful exile, always giv'n to boast,
In deep'ning converse with the Seminole,
Would vow that "in all Carolina's coast—
All Georgia — Alabama — all the whole
Wide world, there was not such a sunny soul
As that young dark-eyed angel of the West!"
Then thus his instances would he unroll:
"Just see her feet, her hands, her timid breast,
Her mouth, her hair — but oh! her dark eyes never rest!"

XXVI.

The Seminole would nod his gruff assent,
And long and stout they shook each other's hands.
The "queen of blossoms" was the name that went
The rounds of all the Mickasukie bands.
Ewald was princess of the sunny lands
And as from lip to lip her mention ran,
Atlassa's inward promise to his hands,
Was valiant deeds and glory in the van, —
So sure does love inspire the manliness of man.

XXVII.

Ewald the idol of Twasinta's shades, —
Palmecho's pride and jewel of his care,
Well loved her chieftain of the everglades:
The matchless watcher of the forests fair.
As free as pine-watched Tampa's breezy air,
The head and boast of his intrepid race,
His brow was noble, — valor's seat was there —
His mien was princely and the eye could trace
The warrior soul that warmed his wildly handsome face.

XXVIII.

Till stars were out, Ewald stood half afraid —
Half conscious of the hour — nor till the moon
Was in the misty vale, could she persuade
Herself that her young chief must not come soon:
'Twas when the whip-poor-will's loud wizard tune
Had warned her from the brake, that she could leave;
Turning to go, — then pausing to commune
With shadowy thoughts, that fancy's touch did weave
Into a spell-like hope that she *might* him receive.

XXIX.

And now she heard Twasinta's watchdogs bark
At many a drowsy cotter's distant door,
Baying such sounds as travel after dark,
Leaving the after-stillness stilly more.
Thus are we warned by dogs, some say, before
Eventful times, — whether this doth reveal,
Or not, some mystery in canine lore, —
The dog's unwonted barking's apt to steal
O'er us at night, and make us strange misgivings feel.

XXX.

The very air uneasily did creep
Among the maples darkling overhead;
And as she reached her gateway on the steep,
She found Palmecho, prying out, who said:
"There's wrong abroad, my Ewald, something dread
Is sure to happen;" and while yet he spake
A hasty footman from the forests sped —
It was an exile, who his way did make
Straight to Palmecho, some alarming news to break.

XXXI.

As Ewald passed, she heard Atlassa's name.
Wide thro' Twasinta spread the hasty news,
Like stubbles crackling in a wind-swept flame.
Ah! now was trouble's somber currents loose!
With muttered threats and presages profuse,
The young men's speeches stirred the eager crowd;
Whilst old men thought up their ancestral views,
And triumphs, that well made the warrior proud —
But all for action were unanimous and loud.

XXXII.

At daybreak, ere a flock fresh scatt'ring browsed
The still gray slopes, the loud echoing horn,
With sudden 'larum, all Twasinta roused;
And quietude was in her bosom torn!
How dreadful was confusion on that morn!
Soon forth from early field and drowsy cot,
Palmecho's servants, mutt'ring wrath or scorn,
O'er fence and ditches hurried to the spot
Whence came the signals to repel a dastard plot!

XXXIII.

Hoe axe and pick were clashing on the air,
Old swords and muskets made by long disuse
And ancient rust to look grim things were there!
Club scythe and rake — whatever one might choose,
In one commingling torrent now were loose!
It was a ghastly sea, whose surge pressed surge,
All ploughed to frothy anger by abuse,
That now did roar! and on the sudden verge
Of desperation men stood nerved the worst to urge!

XXXIV.

Behind them were their homes wives children — all!
Forth in the breach sons husbands, fathers stood
To meet what came if e'en the heav'ns must fall!
Thro' unpolluted fields by Waxe's flood,
O'er meadows sweet and in the palmy wood,
The armor of the foe gleamed in the sun:
Proud was the aged maroon's incensed mood,
As forth to meet them in a feeble run,
He waved his servants back, and thus his speech begun:

XXXV.

"What troop is this that comes to mine abode!
What seek ye here? Intruders! will ye dare
To hoof my grounds? Why shun yon open road!
Age quencheth not resentment! and beware,
Whoe'er ye be, or whence soe'er ye are,
Ye come no further!" Rapid gestures told
How he was moved; but without heed or care,
On rode the soldiers till he had seized hold
One's reins, and felt a sabre's blow that laid him cold.

XXXVI.

The mutt'ring breaks! — a yell! — a rush! — a rage!
The servants come! blades clatter missiles fly!
The trained dragoons in battle-form engage
These rude brave fellows — aim with deadly eye —
Fall back in line, reload and deadlier try
Successive aims! — ah! but the gods inspire
The freemen who see freemen by him die! —
Each soldier's shot but builds the unconquered fire,
Twasinta's sons come on to rescue or expire!

XXXVII.

Around their prostrate chieftain they contend,
The foe's dread volleys can not hinder more!
In strong arms seized, their bleeding father-friend
Is borne away, as from the mansion door
Flies a sweet form, in frantic fondness o'er
Her sire to bend! But hark! what means the cries
That startle silent Waxe's utmost shore?
With bated breath full soon each dragoon eyes
His rear, faces about puts spurs and headlong flies.

XXXVIII.

Atlassa's fearless plume was now in sight,
His Seminoles towards Twasinta cheered.
Twasinta answered with her valiant might.
And deaf'ning shouts did greet them as they neared!
Till on Palmecho's threshold they appeared,
The tempest of rejoicings held its sway;
Then on the roof the flag of Spain was reared,
And Mickasukie's braves the live long day,
Were thro' Twasinta led in many a festive way.

Proud spirit of the hommock-bounded home
Well wast thy valor like a buckler worn!

Twasinta's Seminoles; or, Rape of Florida.—Page 10, Stanza xxiii.

XXXIX.

Did bivouac fires e'er shed a holier light
O'er the eternal slumbers of the slain,
Tho' kings were conquered than was seen that night,
From candles burning on Twasinta's plain?
Or where the hearth-fire kindled hope again?
Roll the loud drum! and fill the brazen blast!
Heralds report the laureled victor's train! —
Let royal cups to valor's lips be past,
And still Twasinta's sons their undimmed glory hast.

XL.

Of how Atlassa's hours that night went by,
As he with Ewald watched his aged friend,
There's none mote ask, for none mote aim to pry
In sacred things, —the eye would e'en offend
If it should touch them! — angels might not bend
In admiration or they must desire
A mortal hour or two on earth to spend:
So let us leave the mansion nor aspire
To feast a curious gaze whence angels should retire

XLI.

Oh! what a change one fleeting hour may bring!
What grand achievements may escape the hand,
When man had seemed to vanquish everything!
Fate, stern Dictatress but assumes her wand
And wizard throne! — the doomed on sea and land
Doth fall by her irrevocable thrust!
The King descends to beg at her command,
The pride of empire humbles in the dust,
And all that man *would do* bows down to what he *must*.

XLII.

She waves in air, — unreefs the tempest's shrouds!
She throws a spark red angry flame forth flies
And climbs the palace dome into the clouds,
To melt in ruins the toil of centuries!
Lo! where yon sea-watched mountains darkly rise!
She thrusts them in their rock-seamed armor brown;
Volcano leaps to the night-glaring skies,
An earthquake drinks the crumbling city down,
And dashed on high the monster wrecks of Ocean frown.

XLIII.

Vain mortals we! fond worms! how slow to note!
Man is but man! The subjects at his feet
To-day may aim to-morrow at his throat.
Before whom he, in open battle beat
An hour ago, *this* hour he may retreat;
Or on his armored hight-invincible
He may fall by the cunning of deceit.
From first to last, in spite of human will,
Fate ever moves unfoiled, Dictatress stern and still.

XLIV.

Fate comes at last, no telling where nor when!
The flag of truce from San Augustine's gate,
And oily speeches of designing men,
Reduced Twasinta's sons in their estate! —
Palmecho, at the council table sate
To prove by word what they in arms had claimed,
The right to live as freemen, small and great—
But, be it said and * * * * * dust be blamed;
This land should blush when'er a flag of truce is named.

XLV.

Palmecho spoke of wars, and rights, and lands,
The hardened pirates * * * * * at their head,
Heard with deep ire the brave old chief's demands!
With inborn hate they gave him chains instead,
And forth to seize his daughter hotly sped;
But mounting for the wilds, her valiant steed
Swept where the whist'ling cypress darkly spread,
And bore from sight in his pursuers' lead,
Foaming the scornful boast, that Ewald should be freed.

XLVI.

'Tis night, the gathering storm approaches fast;
Dark roll the low'ring clouds o'er Tampa's flood;
Earth groans as thunders utter forth their blast,
And light'nings gleam across the startled wood!
'Tis as if Terror, calling up her brood,
Did howl to hear their deep responsive howls;
Or Darkness from her nether caverns stood,
To horrify with most unmortal scowls
And glints the habitations of unhappy souls!

XLVII.

Ah! such a night! How pallid nature reels
And shudders in the face of what forebodes!
And flying at Destruction's furious wheels
The wrath and pennons of insatiate gods
Now seem to rush! 'Tis still! And now the floods
Of heav'n break up! The big drops spatt'ring break!
Down! down! the sluices pour! The drenchy roads
Are streams of sheety flame! The pine tops quake
And howl in direful hubbub as the winds awake!

XLVIII.

Ah! such a night! And who is this abroad?
Lo! Where 'mid Tampa's pines she darts along!
Unreigned her fiery courser spurns the road,
And leaps away the crashing trees among!
Oh! can Ewald, so innocent and young,
Thus like a spirit of the storm fly on!
Ah! but the heart of gentleness is strong
When woman sallies forth, unhelped, alone,
With but one star of hope, and that one almost gone.

XLIX.

To where a hunter's lodge gleams thro' the trees,
She turns her champing steed and hails outright;
A warrior answering in the door she sees,—
"Who's this abroad in such a stormy night?"
She answers not, but straightway doth alight,
And when her quick eyes and Atlassa's meet,
He stands with stark amazement, speechless quite.
"'Tis I, Atlassa," now with accents sweet,
The trembling Ewald speaks, as swift her heart doth beat.

L.

They enter, and the chieftain lowly bows,—
He leads Ewald and quickly draws a seat;
His warriors sit around in silent rows,
And on their camp skins draw away their feet,
While their brave eyes in secret wonder meet;
Till thus to speak began their lovely guest;
They knew her language and her words were sweet—
"Warriors, I come to you with what, expressed,
Will cause a rankling fire to burn a valiant breast."

LI.

"At San Augustine *now* Palmecho pines,—
They chained him at the council there to-day!
The dungeon's gloom his aged sight confines,
I saw the armed men dragging him away!
'*Seize* now his child!' I heard a grim voice say,
And but for my brave steed that bore me here,
I too had been in chains, a prisoner—nay,
Had been the mock and jests of wild beasts, where,
To bear man's wrongs were death, and tenfold more severe."

LII.

Where glared the camp fire, now Atlassa rose,—
His oft-tried warriors waited his command.
A downward glance on these he sternly throws,—
They seize their arms and close around him stand!
Dangers ne'er bristled round a braver band!
Half list'ning, as for foes, the chief begun,
While tenderly he held young Ewald's hand:
"Witness ye braves, who oft have battles won,—
Speak now, what peril did Atlassa ever shun?"

LIII.

"Witness ye pines on Mickasukie's shore!
Witness ye brakes and glens of Florida!
Did ever I disgrace the soil that bore
My race by coward's act? From Tampa Bay,
Have I not met the armed foe in the way,
E'en to these bounds? Ye Seminoles once brave—
Brave ever! witness that I now do say:
Let not my country owe me e'en a grave,
If Sire Palmecho pine one fortnight more a slave!"

LIV.

Ewald now from her neck toss'd tresses wild,
And gazed upon her chieftain's valiant face—
Hope lit the spirit of the woman-child!
While with the native courage of his race,
A warrior pluck'd his chief's knife from its place,
And waving it aloft, stern-looking, cried:
"Who wears this blade and doth the task embrace
To free Palmecho, weal or woe betide,
I'll follow where he goes or perish at his side!"

LV.

Loud rang the shouts; the storm heard and the night,
The Seminole, the dread of Tampa's coast,
Was in his bosom stirred! and in such might,
Not Buena Vista's hero, Mexic's boast,
Nor war-worn Clinch's mercenary host
Could drive him back: "She is our natal star!"
They cried and yelled, for who should yell the most;
"Her beauty shines on us from Candahar,
Lead us to bring Palmecho to his home afar!"

LVI.

Atlassa spoke: "At morn bring up her steed,
And lead her to our village by the lake:
The haughty foe a cougar's cry may heed,
And cow'r ere yet the glinted morn shall wake!
Loud! loud till then, and dark, thou tempest, break!
Rock San Augustine's sentry in his sleep
Till I shall come!" He paused, adieu to take,
And out into the pitchy woods did leap,
While at his heels two braves their stormy way did keep.

LVII.

How passing strange is love! His airy wing,
Soft as gossamer, may rest on a beam,
Or glow in summer mists! He haunts the spring,
Gay in the ripplings of the sunbright stream!
He revels daylong in a rain show'r's dream,
And is a truant 'mid the lisping leaves,
On languid mosses where the young flow'rs teem,
A garland for his fairy mate he weaves,
And hears such elfin strains as no dull ear receives.

LVIII.

Ah! yet how strange is love! He tunes his shell
To breathing violets, and to the show'r,
He says sweet things in song; his whispers dwell
Upon the wind's lips — he smiles in each flow'r,
Laughs in the joyous rustle of the bow'r,
And murmurs where the breezeless willows pine;
He chirrups in the morning's dew-fresh hour,
Deep in the lulled shade flees the midday shine,
And like a spell pervades the evening's gray decline.

LIX.

How passing strange! He climbs the awful steep
To sit upon the bald old eagle's hight, —
Goes down for treasures in the coralled deep —
Disputes the reign of tempest-warring night,
Quenches the flames of war, — nor famine's blight,
Nor burning Equinox, nor Arctic cold,
Can stay him in his universal might!
Stranger than life, a gentle prince and bold,
In lovely woman's eyes his palace you behold.

LX.

He is capricious often seizing hearts
That least suspect him and as often he
Doth sport with trials — whence his sudden starts,
Hairbreadth escapes, and bouts in which to be,
Not always seems most wise to chastity,
In passionate momentary wanderings,
Or long consistent quiets, ever free, —
Sweet welcome spirit, where he rests his wings
Divinest charms invest the commonest of things!

LXI.

If now the bright sensation of an hour,
He flits from scene to scene in gorgeous hues,
Soon o'er his bloom-sweet task his wings will low'r,
And he with busy hopes content, will choose
To taste the sweets of toil-inducing dews;
And fail at last, or blossom with success,
His task is sweet, and he cannot refuse.
Thrice blessed himself, his mission is to bless —
And iron-visaged fate will smile in his caress.

LXII.

I pity him who ne'er has loved a woman,
And that outright, — with all her faults thrown in;
For the sole reason is, that he is no man,
And wears the downcast of orig'nal sin!
Who cannot look in woman's eyes, and win
That glimpse of heaven that Adam erst derived
From dwelling near enough to see within?
Love's just the Eden of which he's deprived,
Who has not truly loved, has never truly lived.

LXIII.

A hunter's lodge in Tampa's woods at night, —
A raging storm abroad — Palmecho chained —
And still where gleamed the hearth's uncertain light,
Ewald felt something in her heart which pained,
Both when it left her and when it remained:
Vacant she gazed, forgetting to forget;
Thoughts light as failing shadows were retained, —
She shut them out — they toyed with her yet, —
Such is the fate of those who toil in young love's net.

LXIV.

'Twas true, Atlassa's fame was greatly known,
His deeds of valor thrilled on many a tongue;
Palmecho proudly did his friendship own;
He knew the father — *then* the son was young —
He too was mighty, — valiant men among —
Yes, *he* had trained his only gifted son,
Whose name of late in every council rung;
She thought all this, and now again begun
Thinking of him — no — of herself — no, not any one!

LXV.

A father held in chains! She thought of that,
But he would be soon rescued, oh! the thought!
To San Augustine, he who faltered at
No mortal peril, soon must come or ought.
Her father home again in triumph brought!
To think! song! music! dance and faces bright!
Greetings, and love unhindered and untaught!
All this went in her mind, as at the light
She blindly gazed, forgetting that the night was night.

LXVI.

Now while her friends sit round to watch and guard,
We leave her with them and her thoughts to stay.
Fierce o'er the parapets the lightnings glared
At San Augustine — dangerous the way,
For, in their drowsy tents an army lay!
Atlassa crept towards a grizzly tow'r,
Where is the storied prison, old and gray;
Louder the tempest roared in that grim hour,
And rolled the sea to meet the heav'ns that seem'd to low'r.

LXVII.

Dark rose the walls, a church and prison joined,
Their kindred glooms to blend and intermix.
Dungeon'd in one, the unknown victim pined,
And in the other mid quaint candlesticks,
Somber and weird arose a crucifix:
How fitly these portrayed the men who built
A house of God o'er shadowed by old Nick's —
Vain man, to thus offend thy Maker! wilt
Thou look on images to take away thy guilt!

LXVIII.

How slight the transit superstition makes
From common crime to acts of righteousness!
E'en human life in willful hate she takes,
Makes earth a waste and desert of distress,
Where lust and rapine rival in excess;
Then from the smoke of some mysterious rite,
She shadows forth in all as if to bless!
And who disputes must perish in her sight,
An heretic, an enemy of God and right!

LXIX.

Man will hold some religion, most believe,
Mainly to hush the soul's rebuke of wrong;
They would their very conscious selves deceive,
By hearing God's will in an unknown tongue,
And recitals not understood and long.
Hence, from the conscience, they with ease appeal
To crime's high court, the mysteries among.
What then are human hearts? — earth's woe or weal
When man wrongs man, inspired divinely *not* to *feel*?

LXX.

Thus envy's blist'rous tongue her victim smites,
Malice her bludgeon whirls, Theft stalks abroad,
Lust thrives, and like a deadly serpent bites,
And highway vandalism takes the road
To spoil the earth and preach the word of God!
Oh! infamous insult to heaven and earth!
Well was the ground on Sin's account called Nod!
The sum of crimes that have *religious* birth
Would blight the hills of God and smite them with a dearth

LXXI.

Thus, San Augustine's church and prison joined,
Fitly portrayed crime's eminent success;
When hounds and murderous troops were loosed to find
The unsuspecting exile, and to press
The wretched Seminole from his recess
In hommock far, or by the dark bayou;
To burn his corn-fields in the wilderness,
And drag the helpless child and mother thro'
Infested swamps to die in chains as felons do.

LXXII.

Start not! the church and prison are our text.
The Seminole and exile far removed
From busier scenes, led harmless lives unvexed
And unmolested mid the groves they loved;
Till proud Columbia for all time proved
How much her high religion could perform,
When her slave-holding sons were truly moved! —
How soon her pious bosom could grow warm,
When heathen tribes submitted to her cuel arm.

LXXIII.

If e'er the muse of hist'ry sits to write,
And Florida appear upon her page,
This nation's crimes will blush the noonday light,
And * * * * * * 's name will lead her criminal age!
Of all the cruel wars she e'er did wage,
The cruelest will be to him assigned!
The hardened soldier's lust, the bloodhound's rage
And San Augustine's church and prison joined,
Will be fit monuments for his chivalric mind!

LXXIV.

Extermination was his highest creed,
Bondage the *one* provision of his will,
The blood of innocence marred not the deed.
He knew no art of warfare but to kill:
Slaying was sweet, but slaughter sweeter still!
A human monster, traced thro' tears and blood
From Blount's poor fort on Apalachi's hill,
To Tampa's waters and the Mexic flood, —
But, to forget him is perhaps a common good!

LXXV.

Heard ye not in the cypress come a troop?
Saw ye not by the gray old battlement,
In fear's deep anguish hurdled exiles stoop;
Wife, mother, child within the stockade pent,
As down the angry Apalachi went
The steamy monitor, to belch out death,
While savage Creeks rushed thro' the bloody rent
Made by the iron havoc of its breath,
To massacre the wounded that did shriek beneath?

LXXVI.

A sense of wrong burned in Atlassa's veins,
Flowed with his life, and like a fever eat;
No coward's act upon his hands left stains;
He hated e'en the likeness of deceit, —
In equal contest he knew no defeat —
The one brave object of incessant raids,
E'en Taylor's vet'rans from him must retreat;
So fierce he stood in Mickasukie's shades,
The invincible watcher of the everglades!

LXXVII.

But, on he fares beneath the prison walls,
The gates are shut, and stoutly barred the door;
A drowsy sent'nel slumbers in the halls,
And growls a snarlish cur upon the floor.
Quickly Atlassa scans the building o'er,
Locates each striking object, and discerns
How best to lead assault, and leaves before
A soldier of his daring venture learns;
Leaps from the walls and to his waiting braves returns.

LXXVIII.

O'er San Augustine's gloomy turrets rose
Serenest morn, — forth from a brilliant rift,
Where barring clouds till now the east did close,
The bright sun shone. Vapors began to drift
Along the valleys, and from forests lift
Their mantling mists. Refreshed the wide earth woke,
And to her joyous hosts renewed the gift
Of song and vigor: field and woodland spoke,
And rousing drums anon, the camp's deep slumbers broke.

LXXIX.

The busy tents below the chieftain stirred,
The troops were seen towards a center come;
And now the officers' clear calls he heard, —

The soldiers' hurrying tread — the rattling drum —
The "halt" the "forward!" slow, the hush! the hum —
The rush! the roar! the "double-quick," and then
The call, the count, the handling wearisome
Of arms, and now the "double-quick!" again —
And wondered if by this they multiplied their men!

LXXX.

Forth rode the tropers in the rising sun,
To march against some unsuspecting town.
Atlassa saw them — idly chatting on, —
Bright gleamed their armor, as they sauntered down
The sedgy slope with boxwood overgrown.
Far on their way his eager eye pursued;
The pent up fires that with his life had flown,
Now flamed anew, and as he gazing stood;
Deep in his soul he would have met them if he could.

LXXXI.

Soon from the gates of San Augustine, he
Spied water carriers making for a brook
Beneath a copse — their guards were only three.
He knew Palmecho by his high-born look;
This was his time! — forth from his thick-wood nook,
Covered by under-brush, he crept around,
And near the stream a fair position took, —
Three rifle shots loud o'er the fort did sound,
And by the sallying squads the three dead guards were found.

LXXXII.

No tidings were at Mickasukie heard
Of Ewald or her guards, at late nightfall.
Atlassa with his rescued friend appeared,
But joy was mute — a deep dread did enthrall,
And painful apprehensions trouble all.
Unuttered anguish settled like a spell
That e'en the oldest warriors did appall.
"Lost!" was the whisper that on some hearts fell,
And "carried off!" to others was a dismal knell!

LXXXIII.

Next morn Atlassa and his daring band
Are in Twasinta, yet no tidings come.
At noon they wait — till nightfall is at hand,
Still, still they hope that Ewald may come home.
Suspense yet deepens, still they look for some
Unprobable relief! Palmecho's groans
Begin, and anguish is no longer dumb!
Among his friends he breaks in bitter moans,
And like a hopeless child laments in falt'ring tones.

LXXXIV.

Atlassa looks upon his aged friend,
But cannot speak, for words are empty now!
Straight'ning to all his hight, he will not bend,
For valor sits enthroned upon his brow, —
Ready to strike, he knows not where nor how?
So stands a lion when a foe he hears,
Knitting his nerves to deal the fatal blow:
Alarmed not that a dreadful struggle nears,
But furious to meet who stealthily appears.

LXXXV.

Not long he stood; thrice strode he in the halls,
So lately made the scenes of loud despair.
Now to his braves in undertones he calls, —
They hear but answer not, — with utmost care,
He seems to counsel and his aims declare.
They act assent! they seize their arms! they rise!
The signal giv'n, a war-whoop rends the air!
Back to his clans the Seminole now flies,
And far and near the forest answers to his cries!

LXXXVI.

"My tears are for thee, Ewald! Oh! my tears!
My cheeks do drink them as the parching sod
Drinks up the rain! How joyless now my years!
My head is low! Ah! doth this heavy rod
Chastise me to more perfect trust in God?
Else why, my sweet child, art thou gone from me!
But, if my future must in thorns be trod,
I'll gird my loins about with strength, and be
Faithful till death, and trust my Ewald yet to see!"

LXXXVII.

"On many hills my herded cattle feed,
My flocks are fair to see; and as for gold,
It falleth never to my lot to need.

My maids sing to me, and my young men hold
Their peace if I pass by! Now, as of old,
My lands do drop with fatness! — yet, have I
E'er taken ought and not restored fourfold?
Have I not filled the empty? If the cry
Of any widow came to me, drew I not nigh?"

LXXXVIII.

"What have *I* coveted? What *have* I craved?
Fame, length of years, or glitt'ring hoarded pounds?
Is God not reconciled, am I not saved
In my Redeemer's all-atoning wounds?
If sin aboundeth, grace much more abounds!
Why, then, my broken spirit, art thou cast
A fruitless branch? a waste on barren grounds?
Ah! when the summertide of life is past,
Why am I left to grieve and linger on at last!"

LXXXIX.

"My Ewald was a young roe by the brook
Of a well upon the mountains! She stood
In quiet places by the rocks; she took
Alarm at winds in the leaves of the wood,
And shrank backwards, she was so shy! she could
Lie down on beds of violets, and they
Rose after her! — the lilies of the flood
By Candahar did love her! In the way
From Tampa and the sea 'mong sweet shrubs was her stay."

XC.

"My Ewald, oh! my young roe! how the shades
Of thy Twasinta mourn! Disconsolate
Are all her dwellings! Eve returns, and fades
The twilight on the hills! but at the gate
Beneath the elms, no more do congregate
Our maids and young men! our old men call thee,
But them thou answer'st not, until their weight
Of grief, by reason of their years, can be
No longer borne! The matron's eyes are tearful — she

XCI.

"In silence waits, thou comest not, and still
Her look is for thy coming! Dumb is mirth!
The valleys sing not — hushed is the sad hill!
The windows are darkened — by the dim hearth
Our eyes have run down till there is a dearth
Of tears! Without thee, Ewald, my young roe!
How comfortless is all the bitter earth!
Ah! whither gone my child! canst thou not know!
How thy Twasinta pineth! how her head is low!

XCII.

"The windows of high thought were thy two eyes,
So large, dark and compelling! Thy fair breasts
Were even domes that did so gradual rise
O'er shrines of love! The shade at noon, that rests
On Waxe's cliffs, is thy dark brow. The vests
Of some sweet nun, loose-falling down, thy hair!
Thy voice was like the turtle's of the nests,
Thy step was as the flow'ret-pressing air; —
Thou idol of my love, my Ewald young and fair!

XCIII.

Lamenting thus, up rose the old Maroon,
Like Abraham, "with servants," and went out,
Not knowing whither! Till the pensive moon
Was set, and darkness like a pall, about
Him fell, he pressed his strange and dismal route.
Then tenting in a wilderness unknown,
By those whose eyes were quick and arms were stout,
Securely watched, awearied he lay down,
In prayer and bitter meditations all alone!

CANTO III.

I.

On Tampa's hights gray rose the battlements:
A summer's day had gone out in the west;
The conflagration in the elements
Was ended, and the quiet shades of rest
Sank like a dreamer's visions on the breast
Of far reposing nature. Soft the hour
Was, brooding on the bay, and gently prest
And smoothed its bosom, as with magic power,
And fragrance there did breathe from many wind-kissed flow'r.

II.

Ewald before her prison window sate
And leaned her face against the iron bar.
The pensive winds around her seemed to wait,
As o'er Twasinta, beaming out afar,
Beyond the dusk, she saw the evening star!
With friendly gleam, it dropped a ray of cheer,
And seemed to wait for her on Candahar!
And when it beckoned last to disappear,
She felt her eyes grow dim, and brushed away a tear.

III.

She saw the sentry pass with silent feet,
And heard the waters lisping to the shore.
Anon the muffled drums began to beat,
And moving throngs commenced a sullen roar,—
It was the sound of captives driv'n before
The troops! There husbands, wives and little ones,
To look upon Twasinta's fields no more,
Were hurried off. She heard their bitter moans,
And clanking chains that mingled with their rising groans!

IV.

The ship was waiting on the busy tide,
Palmecho's faithful friends must soon be gone,
And in her living tomb Ewald must bide
The stony silence of her fate alone!
Ah! how was her young bosom then undone!
'Twere better that her wretched friends might be
Where she might hear, at least, a kindred groan;
But all was over, and the sullen sea
Rolled on as ever,—an unfathomed mystery!

V.

There is a grateful balm for weeping eyes!
And e'en when trouble's little rest has flown,
Slumber, at vision's tender portals tries,
To shut the fevered lids forgetful down!
Happy the soul whose rest can find a stone,
If gentle slumber soothe the aching breast!
Ewald across her wretched couch had thrown
Herself, and closed her eyes in childish rest —
Young innocence so sweet could not be long unblest!

VI.

Ah! did she dream! for still her natal star,
Above the valleys shed a lingering ray,
And seemed to wait for her on Candahar!
Once more it was the close of gentle day;
A spirit brooded on the hilltops gray,
And in the dusk were mellow sounds abroad!
Up from the solemn woods and far away,
The cheerful lab'rer from his maize fields strode,
And lads were driving home their cattle in the road.

VII.

The darkling elms were leaning o'er her gate,
Like keepers of some ancient secret still! —
She stood beneath them, half afraid to wait;
Heard lazy bells come moping from the hill,
And heard the witch-complaining whip-poor-will.
Ah! did she dream! the glow-worm's tiny glare
Was in the dews! she felt a nameless thrill,
And breath— warm flushes in the pulsing air,
'Mid sweetest scent of fields and gardens blossom'd fair.

VIII.

Ah! innocence and beauty! at thy age,
To see thee slumb'ring there in such a place,—
A lovely dreamer in a human cage!
The moon entranced is looking in thy face,—
On thy half-conscious lips, she now doth trace
The quiv'rings of young pleasure's soft delight;
Such as zephyrus wakes as she doth race
With tiniest waves; or such as sunbeams bright
'Mid wild'ring toil of leaves are to the ravished sight!

IX.

Twasinta, oh Twasinta! couldst thou see,
Thro' tears, thou now wouldst look upon thy child,
As here she innocently dreams of thee!
Her shy feet press thy meadows undefiled,
'Mid first-born dews! Her heart is gay and wild
In sweet unconsciousness of what impends,—
She hears thy lulling boughs and voices mild,
As o'er her native flow'rs once more she bends! —
But where the spoiler lurks, how soon the bliss-dream ends!

X.

Of creeping things there's none so vile or worse
Than man, when he the creature of his lusts,
Bred in the kennel of Satanic force,
Is woman's lord. Never Brazilian dusts

Were marked by a worse adder's slime! He thrusts
A scorching glare that burns in like a coal,
And fangs the writhing life that vainly trusts
Her charms exposed to move him! His control
Complete, a beast he gloats extinguishing the soul!

XI.

The moving of an iron bolt below,
Harsh thro' the corridor grates on the ear!
Light footfalls follow cautiously and slow,—
Now pausing — dying out — they disappear,
And now returning, stealthily more near.
Ewald springs softly to her bolted door,
And still as statue leans in breathless fear;
Till, pale as moonbeams on her prison floor,
Her young cheeks turn, as nearer draw the steps once more.

XII.

The dusky shadows seem to glint and move—
The ghostly creatures of expectancy,
Wont mid such scenes in these dark halls to rove,
And perch around and gloat mysteriously!
Yet Ewald leans and listens tremblingly.
But now what pangs! —a hurried footstep lands
Without a hasty hand thrusts in a key,—
The iron yields! a man before her stands! —
She darts across her cell, she moans! she wrings her hands!

XIII.

He follows up, — at each approach she flies —
She shrinks — she mutters and entreating stares!
The sullen walls drink up her fruitless cries,
While thus enraged the monster on her glares,
And with brute force to seize his prey prepares!
One pleading look to heav'n she wildly throws,
And sinks upon her couch still mutt'ring prayers;
Then like a flying fury at him goes,
Flings wide her prison door and publishes her woes!

XIV.

So the caged bird goes struggling from the hand,
To beat and flutter 'gainst her wirery dome;
And 'scapes as last, to leave her troubler stand
Astonished, as she gains her woody home!
How Ewald passed the night, and saved by whom,
No one may tell, but she was saved from shame,
And when my patient reader shall have come
To ponder well a vet'ran leader's name,
He may remember that to him belongs the fame.

XV.

Still on misfortune blindly moves her train!
We may not linger here; the time draws nigh,
Twasinta's wasted homes appeal in vain,
Palmecho sees his doom! Ah! must he die?
The lurid morn seems waiting in the sky,
As the avenger's mortal work proceeds!
Surely, if human acts are seen on high,
The bosom of angelic nature bleeds,
As yonder hangman to the death his victim leads!

XVI.

Lo! where Palmecho stoops within the gate,
How touching is his tender last farewell!
His child from him they cannot separate,
Tho' ruthless hands provoke the purpose fell!
A daughter's sweet affection who can tell?
A father's benediction how sublime,
When on his lips the words of parting dwell,
And he is pausing on the brink of time,
To lift his eyes towards a brighter, holier clime!

XVII.

Could scenes of bloodshed fill the eyes of death
With mischief too abhorrent, — could the pores
Of cruelty ooze drops, or his hot breath
Grow dull and bated — on the cypress shores
Where Ewald for her aged sire implores,
A cause is seen. Lo! where yon scaffold stands
Gloomy above, while rock-watched Tampa roars!
Clench'd in despair behold her outstretched hands,
Whilst round her grimly press the war-stained soldier-bands!

XVIII.

Ah! doomed to die for shedding human blood,
He who has never caused a mortal pain!
But never martyr's faith more nobly stood
A sacrifice by tyrant madly slain!
Never did resignation less complain!

Stern looking on his executioner,
He pities him, nor hopes to pity gain;
When 'mid the throngs he hears his child demur,
And turns to rest a parent's loving gaze on her!

XIX.

"Thou last hope of my dotage, oh! my child;
Thou one green branch of age's withered tree,
I see thee shiv'ring in the tempest wild,
That tears thy parent trunk away from thee!
Ah! I could wish thou didst not mourn for me!
Then could I yearn to find the long, long sleep
That kisses down life's damp lids tranquilly
From all their sorrows! But thy courage keep—
The end may come at last, with joy for those who weep!"

XX.

Ah! there was Pathos on her very knees,
And chained Endurance pitying his child!
E'en Cruelty red-handed's ill at ease
Where beauty pleads so tenderly and wild;
And to death's stroke old age stands reconciled,
"Spare! spare my father! won't you! — won't you — spare!"
The daughter cries till vengeance is beguiled
From wanton haste, and seems for once to care,
And hold his doubtful breath at shrieks of wild despair!

XXI.

"My father! oh, my father! Do not bring
His guiltless hairs dishonored to the grave!
He did not — could not have done such a thing!
He never wronged a soul! — he never gave
A child offense! Oh! do but *this*, I crave! —
Be not in haste a good man's blood to shed!
Oh! spare! and I will be your willing slave
Till he who to the fatal rescue led
Shall show that by Palmecho's hand no soldier bled!

XXII.

A brawny guard the frantic pleader grasps,
To force her off,—she breaks away and flies
Thro' the grim throng, towards her father — clasps
His stooping neck,— upon his bosom lies,
And looking *cold* in her assailant's eyes,
Half hid in raven clouds of falling hair,—
"You *shall not!* — Oh! you *shall not! shall not!*" cries.
Ah! what a stroke for tragic art was there,—
Grief on his aged breast supporting young despair!

XXIII.

The spirits of the wood by Tampa seem
To sink their hidings into darker shade.
There lingers not the least reluctant beam
Amid the gloom that doth the scene pervade.
The scaffold specter-like, on high arrayed,
Looks down in grim rebuke. A pause ensues,
A moment flies — another still delayed
Brings indecision,— when the leaders choose
To wait, and to secure Atlassa, Ewald use.

XXIV.

"Return them to their cells!" is the command;
"A fortnight hence shall be the time allowed,
And if Atlassa come not with his band,
Palmecho hangs! And thus this Nation vowed!
Ah! could such be, when all the land was proud
And boastful of the policy of war,
That swept from over Florida the cloud
That brooded in destruction's gloom afar?
Was such majestic battle's only exemplar!

XXV.

Oh! Florida! how fair and yet how frail,
Thou daughter of the Sun bereft forlorn!
'Tis sad to hear thy exiled children's wail,
And hear thy empty fields in concert mourn,
While Rapine dwells where Peace did once sojourn!
'Tis sad that Ewald now in prison pines.
Ah! it were better to have ne'er been born!
And there is still a hope that ne'er resigns,
And woman's heart is strong when faith with courage joins.

XXVI.

The moon was low on Tampa's quiet wave,
The drowsy camp was silent on the hill,
And patient earth was all composure, save,
A little while away, a night bird shrill
Trilling her throat was heard, when all was still.
A sentinel lone standing in the moon
Was all that might be seen of life, until
Beneath the prison walls there did commune
Twasinta's child and Abraham, the old Maroon.

XXVII.

Thus spoke the eager maid: "Oh! Abraham,
Be thou my message-bearing angel! Fly!
Find out his camp! — inform him where I am —
Tell him his friend Palmecho's doomed to die,—
Tell him to come in haste, the time is nigh!
He is a warrior and a wary chief,
And keeps his guard, but tell him, somehow I
Am anxious that he *watch!* — be not too brief —
For harm to him will add calamity to grief!

XXVIII.

"Hint that the pomp and circumstance of war
Suggest strong body-guards and chosen men,
And let a truce flag, waving from afar,
Impose a friendly aspect; gathering then
His warriors well about him, wait, and when
The garrison comes out, be it declared
Who slew the guards in San Augustine's glen.
Then may Palmecho's life to me be spared,
And him to rescue mankind know Atlassa dared!"

XXIX.

Now, Abraham! if you have ever loved
A child — your own — or if you e'er did feel
A fount of sorrow in your bosom moved,
Turn not your ear from wildest grief's appeal!
Earth's last support to woman's trembling weal
Is faith in man! — then covenant with me,—
While at the shrine of trust my soul shall kneel,—
Do convenant that thou wilt faithful be,
And woman's prayers in heaven shall breathe a word for thee!

XXX.

The brave old chief of peace and kindly deeds
Lifted towards the moon his bronzed brow,
And pond'ring as a man who deeply heeds,
Uttered his answer carefully and low;
"Maiden, the stars are looking at me now,—
They oft have seen me, thro' the long, long past,
Going about for peace; and they will glow
As many witnesses, that to the last,
The feet of Abraham for good were ever fast.

XXXI.

"The cypress and the desert pine can tell
How often I have traveled night and day,
And in their shades what perils me befell,
From savage beasts infesting every way,
And scouts more savage that around me lay;
That I should falter now, 'twould seem too late,—
Trust me! is all that Abraham can say!"
Thus ended, Ewald watched him from the gate,
Till lost from view within the moon-lit forests great.

XXXII.

Hail Florida! ye palmy forests hail!
Hail densest pines and fields of endless bloom!
'Twas sweet, I ween, in Apalachi's vale,
To wander forth in the deep foliage gloom,
Where the wide air was scarce of breathing room,—
To see the soft bananas drooping thro',
And the great dusky yellow orange loom
Mid languid leaves: Thus as the aspect grew
From change to change, the eye did fresh delights pursue.

XXXIII.

'Twas sweet to see the blossoms, many-hued,
Flush in the Summertide's luxuriant smile,
Soft shim'ring in the sunlight, half subdued
By great dense boughs of green. 'Twas sweet to while
The hours by fenceless paths for many a mile;
To pause 'mid the great shades where the birds swung,
And follow fancy's pleased eye thro' each aisle,
To nymph abodes, the leafy haunts among;
Where hues had speech and silence found a joyous tongue.

XXXIV.

Such scenes as these, the exile's pensive eye
Enjoyed with satisfaction deep and true.
The Seminole looked proud and dreamily,
Or musing walked, with scarcely more to do.
Surely there never was a happier view!
From town to town, mid groves and by the sea,
To Mickasukie and the great Wahoo;
The joyous scenes of Summer wild and free,
Lured Care to rest on Pleasure's lap continually.

XXXV.

Hark! in the troubled West what means this roar?
Like forests in a storm's tremendous glee,
Or like the waves on dread Atlantic's shore,
It rolls and breaks around Mickanopy!
Oh! what hath roused this angry human sea?
Why howls the waste in such unwonted throes?
What rends the bosom of tranquillity?
The loud, resistless onset of fierce foes,
Startles a peaceful land and breaks its deep repose!

XXXVI.

Lo! the fierce bands from distant solitudes,
And hasty scouts from Apalachi's side!
The mutt'ring foe is threading Tampa's woods,
With savage Creeks and loud-mouthed hounds allied;
Wide o'er the land his mounted patrols ride,
Thro' hommocks dark and forests dense they lead;
While burning villages afar descried,
Proclaim the bold incendiary's deed,
And make the heavens lurid where the hosts proceed!

XXXVII.

This is the conquest of the flow'ry land!
He who has earned the fame of many wars —
America's chief captain in command,
Marshals his battle-hardened regulars!
Proud thro' the pine woods float the stripes and stars,
And restive steeds toward the onset neigh;
While, kindling recollections of his scars,
In his green haunts no longer to give way,
The Seminole looks forth, a hunted beast at bay!

XXXVIII.

Ah! 'tis the dreadful eve of battle now!
The low'ring storm of nations comes apace;
Deep clouds have settled on Destruction's brow,
And dismal thunders hem Atlassa's race!
Ah! what but valor stands in such a place?
Wives, children, and the old, all mounted wait
To fly at once, while in each warrior's face
The inwrought lines of deep resentful hate
Betray that soon resistance will be desperate.

XXXIX.

The threat'ning storm no longer holds its wrath,
The sanguine troops their stubborn foe engage;
While allied Creeks skulk 'round in every path,
Nefarious flankings, right and left to wage;
Torturing Desperation into rage,
And demon yells with roar of muskets blend:
But, rallying fierce upon the hommock's edge,
They who for homes and liberty contend,
As grim as *Hate* receive the troops and *on* them bend!

XL.

His fearless plume, lo! how Atlassa bears,
For deadly aiming guns a brilliant mark!
The erring bullet hisses at his ears,
But *heedless still* he walks a god; and hark!
His voice is clear! Loud o'er the battle dark
Its tones of magic urge his braves to fame
And deeds of daring! and the latest spark
Of ebbing life it kindles to a flame,
As each expiring warrior gasps his leader's name!

XLI.

Ah! ye who con the musty tomes of eld,
To watch the fabled scorpions of ire
Kindle the fatal wrath that mankind held
In mortal dread, behold this chief in dire
And desp'rate conflict, build a deadlier fire
Around the rude homes of his tribal braves!
Tortured, the angry flames cannot expire,
Each warrior like a fury now behaves, —
All like wild beasts *hunt* death! Ah! can such men be slaves?

XLII.

Furies imprisoned by infernal hate,
Where the hot irons circumvex their pains,
Surge not more fierce on Torture's brazen gate,
Nor writhe defiant more in blist'ring chains,
When, death inducing not doth stream their veins;
Than surge and writhe these Seminoles beneath
The hail of angry lead that on them rains!
From tree and hommock *rushing* to the death,
They blanch grim slaughter's cheeks and drink his very breath!

XLIII.

Flying like wing'd madness upon what they seeth,
They hand the foe within the dreadful breach!
Fastening him like torments with hungry teeth,

Till lifeless one shall sink, and sometimes each,
They hew down all within the tom'hawk's reach!
So fly infuriated hornets from their nests,
Upon assailants: Thus doth valor teach,
When roused to desperation's potent tests,
That "Liberty or Death," is one of God's behests!

XLIV.

Fierce Spirit of the Seminole! what fate
Can tame thy warring sons upon the field!
I see them for a Nation's strength *too* great—
Outnumbered and outarmed they *will not* yield!
Till by the darkness they are well concealed,
They hold an army back and guard their dead;
Thus shall their immortality be sealed,
The bravest of the brave to victory led,
By one whose plume would honor e'en a Bruce's head!

XLV.

Down to the end of time be it proclaimed!
Up to the skies of fame let it be rung!
Wherever valor's sacrifice is named,
Whenever plaudits fire the human tongue;
Or by sweet strings expressed, or mortals sung,
Let it go forth, and let mankind attest,
That, Seminoles and exiles, old and young,
Upon the bosom of their country prest;
By valiant deeds are shrined in ev'ry patriot breast!

XLVI.

Thro' the dead desolation of the past,
The eye of Freedom searches not in vain,
For her surviving shrines, — the pomp and blast
Of might and red Dominion, could attain
To manacling the world's limbs and its brain;
But Freedom's sons must dwell unknown, — apart —
Or wander hopeless, in Contempt's sad plain;
Yet ever, and anon, some giant heart, —
Some prince of thought, a revolution's tide would start.

XLVII.

Some Bruce or Tell, who drank the mountain breath
Of Freedom, and arose to meet her morn;
Some Brown or Lovejoy, whose contempt of death,
Was of the sacred love of Freedom born, —
Whose mentioned dust would shame the lips of scorn!
Some Jefferson, the Knight of Justice fair,
Whose thoughts the brow of ages still adorn;
And whose brave lance of independence rare,
Could thrust base Superstition in her dragon lair!

XLVIII.

Or some Atlassa, who could call his braves
To turfy beds of glory in the dell,
Or vict'ry o'er those who would make them slaves! —
But for such men the wide earth were a hell,
Where vampire priests and kingly vultures fell,
Plucking the fleshless bones of human woe
Would perch thro' time! and in the waste and spell
Of universal carnage, loud or low,
The owls of Superstition would forever go.

XLIX.

The enthusiasts' torch that lit their beacon fires
From Plymouth's Sea to cold Ontario's coasts,
Shone farther than the ken of Pilgrim sires,
In their brief time surveyed: The sturdy hosts
That throated Tyranny and scorned his boasts,
Knew not that on this continent of streams, —
Of endless summers and eternal frosts —
'Mid first-born woods, the light of Freedom beams
On sovran Nature's lap, inducing patriot dreams!

L.

They saw, but "comprehended not the light" —
Colonial life was but a prophecy —
They kindled dimly in an unknown hight,
But could no more — and paused there trustingly,
Till sons explored the ages then *to be*,
And while in silence and eternal dust
They sleep beneath the standard they left free,
A proud Republic — their pathetic trust —
Fraternal hands embellish, and forever must!

LI.

And tho' 'tis sad, in truth it must be said,
They died for Freedom and for *slavery* too!
How noble and *ignoble* are our dead,
How recreant to right, and yet how true!
But o'er a century's historic view,

The valiant Seminole we proudly see;
He died for *Freedom;* and the trembling few
Who fled to Florida his wards to be,
He elevated into freemen's dignity!

LII.

He could not be enslaved — would not enslave
The meanest exile that his friendship sued,
Brave for himself, defending others brave,—
The matchless hero of his time he stood,
His noble heart with freedom's love imbued,
The strong apostle of Humanity!
'Mid forests wild and habitations rude,
He made his bed of glory by the sea;
The friend of Florida and man, there let him be!

LIII.

Upon the proud front let Atlassa stand,
Night in the everglades is friendly now.
The foe retires and darkness is at hand,
And seems to listen to the voices low
Of warriors round their chief, whose valiant brow
Is heavy with the horrors of the day!
Upon the turf the wounded in a row,
Painful but silent, for attention lay,—
The dead to Apalachi's shores are borne away.

LIV.

The war is ended, let the victor rest!
His brave blood seals the title of his fame.
His fair land deems him worthy of her breast,
Historic truth embalms his warlike name,
While hero temples well admit his claim!
And when the epic muse shall cast around,
A theme to kindle valor into flame,
Where Florida's soft palms shade many a mound,
By Mickasukie and the sea, will *e'er* be found.

LV.

Oh! inexorable, oh! righteous Time,
Thy mist-dispersing light o'er us roll on!
Let thy just beams invest the Sunny Clime,
And bring the truth up from the ages gone!
Oh! we are happy as we stand upon
The summit of a century, and view
How hist'ry pales where thy broad beams have shone!
Thou dread revealer of the old and new,
Inevitable are thy judgments, just and true!

CANTO IV.

I.

Gazing away upon the toiling seas,
In gloomy rows the silent captives sate;
And as the ship rode off before the breeze,
They murmured not, though all disconsolate;
But mournful seemed, and joined to meditate,—
Each other to regard with patient sighs,
And gather courage up to hope and wait;
Still looking back, with sad reluctant eyes,
To bid a last adieu to Florida's blue skies!

II.

Those who had counseled Tampa's sons of old,
Now lift their drooping faces from their hands;
And those who had done battle stern and bold,—
Fierce sons of Seminole and exile bands,—
Look up as in their midst Atlassa stands.
Shorewards his arms in heavy irons stretch,
And while his mien a silence deep commands,
His fiery glance inspires the veriest wretch,
For all well know that he's for mortal foe a match!

III.

Full well they know the perfidy and guile
By which at Tampa they in chains were held.
The insult to a flag of truce so vile,
Astounded all and in each bosom swelled,
A bitter mute despondency. Compelled
To charge themselves with lack of wariness,
They felt that they from homes were self-expelled;
So sighs alone their feelings could express,
As their attentive ear drank down their chief's address.

IV.

"My native Florida! adieu! adieu!
I'm looking at the last pine on thy shore!
Soon other climes must come upon my view,
And thy sweet landscapes meet mine eyes no more!
Oh! Florida! hear now thy son implore!
In thy fair bosom still remember me;
And while the billows shall between us roar,
Or thy smooth sands shall hear a lisping sea,
Let these my latest vows revive and dwell in thee!

V.

"I go in chains but not a pining slave;
Injured but conquered not I still go free!
And yet, ye seats by Mickasukie's wave,

How sad it is that I must *thus* leave thee!
'Twas in thy shades I hoped my grave might be.
When Peace had come to spread her happy reign,
Where sleep the prophet-sires of liberty,
I proudly deemed that comrades should have lain
My weary dust in rest unbroken to remain!

VI.

"Ye pines whose whispers lulled your child to rest,
And whose hoarse anthems nerved him in the fray,
How slept thy shades on Mickasukie's breast,
How crept they from the threshold of the day!—
From such sweet scenes I'll soon be far away!
And Apalachi, parted now from me,
No words can utter what my heart would say!—
But while thy pining shores no more I see,
In his far home, Atlassa still will think of thee!"

VII.

The chieftain speaks no more but still doth gaze
Till Florida is gone and all is sea.
With every canvas breathing, sailors raise
Their outward shouts and sing right merrily
To the dark wave's responsive melody:
But hark! what groans now fill the heedless wind!
The captive can his home no longer see;
So sinks in unsupported grief the mind,
When exiles dragged away must leave their homes behind!

VIII.

Atlassa sees those who, whilom could look
Upon him with a hope of sure redress;
And feelings that even *his* heart cannot brook,
Damp his averted eyes, and thoughts that press
Like flame he feels and cannot half express.
There are his comrades in long bloody wars;
Their lips are still—their looks speak none the less,—
Their maimed limbs, and their faces deep with scars,
Are the dumb eloquence which tells the wrong that mars.

IX.

There is a time when speech is all too frail,
There is a *place* where silence speaks the most:
What is the word to paint a human wail,
Or how heroic *speak* where all is lost!
He who wears shackles 'mid his shackled host,
Shows valor's *steel* to sturdily behave,
For life is Freedom's last and *real* cost,
And so, the *last* resistance of the brave,
Is that stern silence which to chains prefers grave.

X.

Full well the patient exile knows his chief,
Full well the Seminole regards his mien;
For to look on him is a strange relief
To those who *with* him, other times have seen,
Ah! they remember *well* what he hath been,—
How readily he sprang to meet the foe!
Bearing misfortunes manfully serene,
They see him now, and trust that he may know
The way of their deliv'rance and direct the blow.

XI.

Still sing the sailors 'mid their masts and spars,
All heedless of a captive's sighs aboard!
In truth 'tis a good time for jolly tars—
The heaving canvas hastens them toward
Their haven, and sea-omens good afford
Continuous presages of a fair sail;
While sportive fancy kens ahead to hoard
The dance and sparkling draught that shall regale,
When they the Crescent City's busy port shall hail

XII.

How near may men be, yet how far apart,
If what lies all unuttered were but told!
How changed is all the province of the heart,
When different men the selfsame sights behold!
To one the skies may glow in dusts of gold,
Sprinkled by hands of promise, while the same
To others like the book of Doom unrolled,
May doleful seem,—tinged with the lurid flame
That lights the ruins and gloom of mishaps dread to name.

XIII.

Atlassa leans, stern looking on his chains,
All else unheeding till a touch he feels,—
Before him stands the soldier-porting Gaines,
His lifted hat the veteran-brow reveals.
With wars acquainted nought his mien conceals;
Meeting the chief as brave men meet the brave,
A glance of mutual admiration seals
The friendliness with which they each behave:
"Unbind him," thunders he, "Atlassa is no slave!"

XIV.

"I've thrown away my rifle," cries the chief,
"I hold a brave hand, we shall now be friends!"
The soldier answers and his words were brief;—
"Only in battle foes, in peace strife ends.
In arms, your conduct to mankind commends
You as a warrior, honorable — *true.*
And now the General in command extends
The hand of high fraternity to you,—
Believe me sir, and this with heartfelt pride
I do."

XV.

Straightening to all his hight, the vet'ran Gaines,
With martial pride investing his high brow,
The signal gives,— a band discoursing strains
Enliv'ning starts — and expectancy now
Stands tiptoe. Seaman at the stern and prow,
And high amid the rigging hush and wait! —
Palmecho is unchained and from below,
Totters up in a poor unsteady gait —
The pathos of an old man borne by sorrow's
weight!

XVI.

There was a hush upon the swelling wave,
The spirit of the waters seemed to be
A silent noticer. The full sails gave
A flutter short and listened breathlessly;
The mews came nearer from the open sea,
And over all there was a deep'ning spell,
Till trumpets flourished loud and suddenly,
And then sweet strains again commenced to
swell,
When Ewald sprang and on her chieftain's
bosom fell.

XVII.

Ewald the princess of the sunny isle,
Ewald the idol of Twasinta's vale, —
The fascinating beauty, who erewhile
A captive pined, in long suspense grown pale,—
Not now less beautiful but much more frail,
Her dark unconquered eyes still claim their
reign,
Lovely in triumph! no weak sob or wail
Escape her lips, or word unmeet and vain;
She simply looks a queen, restored to realms
again!

XVIII.

The dark wave smiled the sails flapped swifter
on,
The mews were off about the sea intent;
And e'en the vet'ran Gaines was up and gone,
When o'er Ewald the silent chieftain leant;
Too well *he* knew what such reunions meant!
Ah! who could rudely linger on the scene,
When arms reluctant pressed by love consent,
And lips like rose-buds with their dews between,
Their dainty sweets yield to the touch? It would
have been

XIX.

A sacrilege polluting e'en the sea!
Not Jonah's disobedience could have stirred
The Ocean gods to wrath more suddenly.
This scene in Neptune's realms was in a word,
A part in Bliss Regained by him preferred
Before the patrons of the wave, to show
That e'en love's *whispers* in the deep are heard —
That her entrancings charm the tides that flow,
And please the pow'rs that reign invincibly
below.

XX.

Ye who are scornful of an injured race, —
Who boast thy fellow mortal to despise,
Look now on war-worn Gaines' valiant face,
Look in the glorious old commander's eyes,
Gaze as on Ewald's neck his proud hand lies,
See how *her* sweet hand nestles there in his;
Now with coy glances, see she deftly tries
And wins the admiring smile which ever gi'es
Woman a pleasure true and man's best treas-
ure is.

XXI.

Now ask the vet'ran — but his fiery eye
Is on you! Look! Draw near! Stand in its
blaze
And let it scorch! — Approach him — there! ask
"Why,
Our leader, why Sir, bring us the disgrace
Which must attach to fawning Ewald's race?"
Imagine that he answers! — hold! now go,
Make haste forsooth! hide thy repugnant face
Till thou art cured! and after this be slow
To stretch thy curious neck life's nobler springs
to know.

XXII.

But we must hasten to a foreign shore, —
To ancient Santa Rosa lift thine eyes;
There the worn exiles, free at last, explore
The plain that by no slave polluted lies
Beneath the peaceful blue of Mexic's skies;
There may they taste their freedom so well won,

"Come now, my love, the moon is on the lake;
Upon the waters is my light canoe;
Come with me, love, and gladsome oars shall make
A music on the parting wave for you,—
Come o'er the waters deep and dark and blue;
Come where the lilies in the marge have sprung,
Come with me, love, for oh, my love is true!"
This is the song that on the lake was sung,
The boatman sang it over when his heart was young.

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Surrounded by their happy families;
There may rejoice to find their struggles done,
And Plenty's benedictions close what wars
begun.

XXIII.

Where the wild cactus lifts its thorny stem,
And sleepily endures the day-long heat,
A free and fruitful clime inviteth them
To rest their whilom weary wand'ring feet.
Oh! how inspiriting the prospect sweet
That now expands upon the open gaze!
Above them yet their tropic branches meet,
The fruit boughs hang in luscious golden maze,
And winds are burdened with their native wood-
land lays.

XXIV.

Here the clear stream holds in its peaceful brim
Such quiet shadows as to them recall
The scenes of Mickasukie's forests dim;
And, mindful still of what did them befall,
Though not cast down, they rise up after all,
And here commence the dream of life again.
Soon cheerful hearths unite their fam'lies small,
The husbandman leads up his joyous train,
And pleasant farms extend wide o'er the vocal
plain.

XXV.

There stands Atlassa 'mid his hopeful few,
The future contemplates and looks before.
The battle storm that erst around him drew
Them to defend their wasted land is o'er.
And now lamenting not his native shore,
He rises still as one born to command,
And challenge comrade's courage tried once
more.
He waves the signal of his gifted hand,
And valiantly they go to subjugate the land.

XXVI.

He led them forth of old, they knew not where,
He followed with them o'er the mournful wave;
They haltered in the wilderness, and there
The human hunter waited to enslave, —
He stepped to front again their leader brave,
And when the foe came on with haughty stride,
A death blow to his insolence he gave:
Then came the weary march, thro' forests wide,
Till they were safe beyond the Rio Grande's
tide.

XXVII.

There, mourning not, they toil and hope again, —
They look not back, their sodden cheeks are dry;
And yet, I ween there is an inward pain
To those whose kindred all unnoticed lie
Beneath the sad sun of a foreign sky.
The South wind whispers to them o'er the wave,
And dampness is perhaps, come in some's eye
Who thinks of a dear well-remembered grave;
But all to mourn are too long suffering and too
brave.

XXVIII.

Since he who looks upon a glorious day
Expiring on the threshold of the West,
Must breathe a thoughtful wish to be away;
And feel within him dying unexprest
The seer-voiced longings of the heart's unrest;
May we not trust that in the evermore,
A friendlier clime awaits the pensive breast;
May we not hope to reach a farther shore,
And catch the billows listing where they cease
to roar?

XXIX.

Oh! must it ever come that earth shall be
A sable field of barrenness? A waste
Of hollow sounds? Must fruitless nature see
Her seasons end? And sunless days — the last —
Roll sightless on mid desolations vast?
Must Time in silence view her broken urn,
Or sit to brood upon an empty Past?
Bereft of years, must she a widow mourn,
And to her childless breast will joy no more
return?

XXX.

And since there is, as hope is prone to sing,
A "Happy Land," why say "far far away?"
May not the restful soul be lingering
Still near its mansion of deserted clay?
The unembodied spirit, why not say,
By matter all unhindered is at home;
Whether delighted round the earth to stray,
Or in a farther universe to roam, —
A guest of future worlds, — then back at times
to come!

XXXI.

If conscious life about the earth might stroll,
A child of Reason still, it then were sweet
To think on a Republic of the soul —
Community of spirits — where *lives* meet

To walk the earth they've known, with joyous feet,
Unharrowed by abysmal thoughts of Death;
Reason would then hold her delightful seat,
And tho' what's mortal, but a mist, a breath,
Were passed away, *life* still would be her "shibboleth."

XXXII.

'Twere sweet to live, if cherishing the trust
That life *itself* doth from the flesh-life spring,—
That what survives affection's tender dust
Is *this* existence, *only* brightening
With azure grace and an immortal wing!
Then might we hope to *feel* as we have *felt*,
And *know* the subtle shadow wavering
Between the *where* we *may* dwell and have dwelt;
Then might we realize, that not in vain we've knelt.

XXXIII.

If then, this be, how sweet the pleasing dream,—
When life had filled its shadow and its shine,—
That led the savage by his dark-wood stream,
To seek a heaven beneath his leafy shrine!
In pathos sweet and tenderness divine,
This solace for the poorest heart it pleads:
When this life o'er her empty urn shall pine,
She sit to mourn not in eternal weeds;
But, pass the shade into the shine that *there* succeeds.

XXXIV.

Those who have labored up dogmatic Blancs
To freeze on horrid crags, or dash below
Into some mangling chasm did leave the banks
And shades of safety in the plain, to know,
Only too late, that such hights can but show
Distances too sublime by far to reach,—
Only too late, that tend'rest comforts grow
Where love's sweet whispers cluster round, to teach
The dear humanity that they disdained to preach.

XXXV.

Who can ascend against Thy awful brow,
Omnipotence! About Thee Thou dost gird
The elements! Thine avalanches flow
Down the incomputable years! and heard
Eternally comes forth Thy Sovran Word,
To warn man back! Thy presence who can bear?
Even of old in mountains thou appeared,
And from thine upper world man Thee did hear,
And quake to stand in clouds of an unmortal fear!

XXXVI.

Thou warnest me the mortal task to shun,
Of tempting thy dread paths above to find.
Stern, silent, incomprehensible One!
Thou risest boundlessly above the mind!
But here below thou hast for love entwined
An altar with the leaf of life, and bloom,
Round which, pathetic human tendrils bind
The off'rings of our hands. May its perfume
Exhale in all the earth, as freedom's fires consume!

XXXVII.

But we have wandered: If the Seminole
May ever reach again his native shore,
How sweet to think of his unhindered soul
Revisiting the scenes he loved before!
But if the hope offend we say no more:
We leave him in his Mexic home at rest,
And still may *dream* that he shall yet pass o'er
The dimpling waves of Mickasukie's breast,
Yet press the flow'ry brinks, that he before has prest!

XXXVIII.

The exiles came unto an ancient well,—
Atlassa sat and Ewald by him stood,
While golden glories of the sunset, fell
Like dreams of heav'n on Santa Rosa's wood.
A shim'ring silence filled the solitude.
There was no time for speech. Palmecho moaned
For joy, and wept, and their responses rude,
With feelings deep and weirdly undertoned,
The warriors gave, still gazing on the earth peace-zoned.

XXXIX.

Oh! God! in all Thy glorious works, Thy praise
Is mightiest mid the hosts of Liberty!
She leads mankind in devious unknown ways,
And sounds her timbrels o'er a conquered sea,
While vocal mountains catch the rising glee!
And, where afar her patient children roam,
The desert wakes to join their jubilee!
They pass or rest, despising what may come;
Only to dwell with thee, the wide world is their home.

XL.

Hail! home of exiles and of Seminoles!
Hail! Mexico, thou weak but goodly land!
The Day of Freedom onward grandly rolls,
And thou shalt yet receive the greeting hand
Of her, who once did like a vulture stand,
To gorge upon thy sons by slave power slain!
The world's respect, ere long thou shalt command;
And when the hosts of Freedom come amain;
Thy sons shall join their shouts ascending from the plain!

XLI.

Those who once came upon thee with the sword,
Are coming now with pruning hooks and plows;
And plains, once trampled by the spoiler's horde,
Are green with fields, and sweet with fruitful boughs.
Awake thou ebon maid! awake! arouse!!
Throw wide thy gates! unlock thy treasures now!
The proud cause of humanity espouse;
And from thy miser-clutching hills shall flow
The wealth that yet must glitter on thy sunny brow!

XLII.

Rise from thy ancient mounds! cells of the dead,
Of whom e'en Legend recollects no tale;
Presumption *only*, sees the life they led
In squalid hut, and still, unplanted dale:
And even *she* is sad to lift the veil!
Oh! what must they have been! Oh! how expire
And on the ears of Time leave not a wail?
In all the past, there smokes no altar fire —
To what renown *could* such a stupid race aspire!

XLIII.

And yet may lowly joys have there been born,
Rude tho' the scenes 'mid which her patrons met.
The sheep boy's carol and the mountain horn,
And merry note of pipe or flageolet,
May well be deemed the things we can't forget;
And these may there have soothed the rustic's ear,
Still, still it comes, unceasing with regret,
That there remains no lingering mark of cheer —
That not a solitary annal doth appear.

XLIV.

We leave thee with thy guests, thou sunny maid!
The daughter of Twasinta dwells with thee;
The chief of Tampa and the everglade
Is with her, and will strive to keep thee free.
Rise thou into a nation's dignity,
And freedom's acclamations spread around!
As Rio Grande rolls down to the sea,
Let the omnific waters catch the sound,
"A queen of beauty in the West is Mexic crowned!"

XLV.

Farewell, thy guests! The light is almost gone
That kindled for them in the everglades!
In all our shores the day of slavery's done.
'Midst the wild freedom of our mighty shades,
Now, every man whose soul the hope pervades
Of life, and liberty, and happiness,
May join with Sovran Labor's plows and spades,
And jocund axes in the wilderness,
To dig and hew away primeval want's fortress.

XLVI.

Who finds *this* country *now*, exulting finds
That nature sounds the anthems of the free, —
The boundless prairie swept by restless winds,
Great forests shouting on tumultuously,
Rivers that send their greetings to the sea,
Peace-loving vales, where mead-rimmed waters run,
Broad lakes, whose shade-fringed margins lisp their glee,
Mountains, that prop their green heights in the sun,
And herded slopes that winter never looks upon!

XLVII.

Priestcraft and Tyranny must not unchain
The mind and limb of man and send him here;
Or they will never see their dupe again,
So soon 'mong freemen will he disappear.
The sights to make him free are everywhere:
He cannot see the farmer tilling corn,
And whistling at his plow, as blithe and clear
As lark or linnet in the dew-sprent morn,
And not feel freedom's wishes in him being born.

XLVIII.

He can not wander in our roads, or stay
Beneath our shades unmoved by what he sees, —
The full ripe orchard by his dusty way,
Busy with children and alive with bees;
The cool spring underneath the green oak trees;
The cider mill a going merrily,
And farmer looking on in his brown ease, —
He cannot, seeing these, but long to be
A sovereign gathering gold crowns from the appletree.

XLIX.

This is a land of free limb and free thought —
Freedom for *all*, home-keeping or abroad, —
Here man is all unhindered, as he ought,
Dreading no priest's rebuke, no despot's nod,
In high respect of Right, the friend of God!
Sole sovereign of himself, by nature throned,
Planting his titles in the royal sod,
He spreads his reign where labor's might is owned,
And harvests revenues for which no subject groaned.

L.

The veriest serf, whose shiv'ring manhood hears
Niagara's astounding waters fall,
Must find that awe of man there disappears
In mists of infinite spray: He cannot call
His monarch's name and feel its spell and thrall·
For human might is swept off in the gaze
And awe of One Sublime Stupendous *All!*
And nought survives except the soul to raise
To one Great God a whisper of deep, sincere praise!

LI.

Thus ends my lay: Reluctantly I leave
Atlassa and his sweet-eyed Southern maid;
Palmecho, too, with whom I much did grieve,
I turn from sadly! Could they but have stayed
Beneath their "vines and fig trees," not afraid!
Yet by their Santa Rosa let them dwell,
Rejoicing in their freedom long delayed!
And while my heart's untrained emotions swell,
Once more I turn to gaze and sigh: farewell! farewell!

NOT A MAN,

AND

YET A MAN:

BY

ALBERRY A. WHITMAN.

SECOND EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED.

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DEDICATION.

TO BISHOP BENJAMIN W. ARNETT, D. D., FRIEND OF MY EARLY STRUGGLES, A GREAT ADMIRER OF RODNEY, THE CHIEF CHARACTER OF THESE LINES; AND A LEARNED AND EMINENT REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS RACE, THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

NOT A MAN, AND YET A MAN.

CANTO I.

SAVILLE.

Sing muse! of Saville and the direful day
When beauty fell to ruthless bands a prey;
And life a sacrifice to savage hate,
Smoked on the altar of an infant State.
The pensive woodlands in their saddest wear,
Pined on the threshold of the Autumn sere,
And mourned their ills in parting Summer's ear.
The waters leaving for the distant main
Sang their departure in a muffled strain;
The dove complaining at the barn was heard,
And sober winds the naked orchards stirred.
And scarce within the dreamy vision's reach
The drowsy elms prolonged their rooky speech.
In Saville, then the border village rude,
Full plenty's songs the ear of labor wooed,
The sun was high on his emblazoned way,
The woods exulted with the songs of day,
And rural comfort's well-contented voice
Each household filled and made all hearts rejoice.
The rosy milkmaid gossiped at her churn,
The lazy windlass groaned at each slow turn,
The distaff whirred and chattered in the door,
The swift brooch danced along the sounding floor;
The matron scolded, and her hands applied,
The wheel went sounding, and the loom replied.
Sir Maxey then with horns, his hunters proud,
For chase assembled in a roaring crowd.
Loud rang the summons, far and near around,
And windy signals roused the kenneled hound,
And when the bands their restive horses strode,
The wayside trembled as they spurned the road.
Three miles from Saville, in the branchy West,
The horsemen on their boist'rous way had pressed,
When on the wild marge of a pathless wood,
They held their flight, and list'ning eager stood.
The hounds had struck a trail upon the brink,
Where late an antlered stag had come to drink,
The cooling waters of a lonely brook,
That mused away thro' many a forest nook.
Soon lively baying o'er the distance broke,
The hills re-echoed and the forest spoke.
The flying pack their goodly prey had sprung,
St. Vincennes' pulseless woodlands deep among.
Like eagles flashing from the vaulted blue,
The fiery steeds in level flight pursue.
In winding glens their hoofy thunders break,
And hills responsive from their silence wake.
Sir Maxey, putting spurs directs the course,
And sweeps away upon his coal black horse.
His comrades follow close in lengthy file,
Wind their glad horns and prime their guns meanwhile:
The woods before them part upon the eye,
And pass in dizzy currents as they fly;
And crouching thickets scamper as they near,
And flee together as they disappear.
Beyond the vision's bounds they thus have gone,
Up hill and down, o'er streams and on and on.
But now, alone on foot young Rodney hastes
Along a passage that divides the wastes.
Forbid to rank, he cannot take his place
With mounted hunters, in the merry chase.

The day wore on, and yet no tidings gave
Of horse or hunter to the anxious slave,
Till, he desparing, turned to watch a trail,
That wound along the thickly wooded vale.

The chase now hushed; the stag beyond his range,
Had lost the hunters in a forest strange;

And worn and hungry, these leisurely drew
To where small fields adorned their opening view.
Beyond, bark lodges here and there are seen
Where lofty woods rise o'er a dark ravine,
And slowly nearing, on their wond'ring eyes,
Soft circling smoke-wreaths from a village rise,
And float in dreamy clouds against the skies.
They pause, look onward, know not what to say,
When thus, Sir Maxey spurring, leads the way:
"Come on, we'll venture down and ask for food
And friendship in this city of the wood."
The hunters follow at a timid pace,
With apprehension kindled in each face.

They reach the village, slowly thro' it ride,
And every part explore from side to side.
They find it is deserted by all save
Small groups of children and the aged brave.
These sit in converse at their wigwam doors,
While memory the valiant past explores;
They on the neighb'ring slopes in peaceful plays,
Their numbers gather and their voices raise.
The squaws are lab'ring in their scanty fields,
Content with what their wild industry yields;
To bide their warriors' much desired return
From distant hunting grounds and long sojourn.

The Autumn hills are in serene repose,
The lofty forests, in their stillness dose,
And solitude asserts her reign afar
From civilization's rest-disturbing jar.
But, hoofy 'larm the woody silence breaks,
The thick boughs flutter and the scene awakes.
Around the hunters, childhood flocks to gaze,
And age arising, looks in mute amaze
Upon the daring strangers, who proceed
To rifle tents, and load each anxious steed.
These helpless fathers of a forest race
Glance fearfully into each other's face,
Pursue the pillagers with heated eyes,
And empty out their souls in frequent sighs;
While in their gath'ring frowns and gestures rude,
Wild valor overleaps decrepitude,
And such a flourish of contempt displays,
As shows that stern resentment is ablaze.
Ah! could they but recall the fleeting years,
Or backwards journey to where disappears
A valiant past, and reach that stalwart time
When nimble life exulted in its prime;
Threefold the numbers that their tents defile
Would meet destruction in their conduct vile.
The hunters mount menacing as they go,
And thro' the village disappearing slow,
Betake them to the woods and brisker ride
Along the neighb'ring forest's eastern side.

There where a peaceful streamlet ambles by
Thro' dabbling ferns and gossips cheerfully
With shaggy roots that reach into the flood,
They spy a maid just verging womanhood.
Now ranging feathers in her head-gear fair,
And with her fingers combing out her hair,
She on the prone bank stands, where smoothly flows
The liquid mirror, and her beauty shows.
Here grand old sylvans raise their solemn heads,
And fling their shades about her where she treads
Beneath their outstretched arms, and looks around
For pretty colors on the leafy ground.
The hunters see her, wayward wild and sweet;
She sees them not, nor hears the horses' feet.
"Hold!" cries Sir Maxey, "what a lovely maid!
Ah! what a princess of this ancient shade!
Let me behold her! Quiet! Do not move!
Did admiration e'er see such a dove?
Young love no sweeter image ever drew
Upon imagination's wildest view.
Her perfect form in idle movement seems
The happy creature of my youthful dreams."
A rougher comrade at his elbow growls,
"A purty good 'un o' the dusky fowls,
She's hard o' hearin', le'me try my gun;
Give her a skere, and see the red wench run."
His deadly eye directs, his rifle speaks,
The maiden lifts her arms and runs and shrieks;
Towards the hunters piteously she flies;
The mournful wastes lamenting with her cries,
Till at their feet she sinks, and all is o'er,
Poor bleeding Nanawawa is no more.

Kind heaven reports the shameful news around,
Far as her sorrowing winds can waft the sound;
Soft echo hears and answers with a sigh,
And saddened hills refuse to make reply.
"I struck her," grunts the ruffian looking down.

"Let's leave," Sir Maxey mutters with a frown;
And on they ride, and covenant to keep
The crime a secret in their bosoms hidden deep.

But hark! what mean those distant shouts that rise
And break and clamor in the angry skies?
Flying this way, the heavy air they wing,
And nearer, clearer, shriller, faster ring.
The forest rages, groan the loud hills sore,
The hoarse earth murmurs and the heavens roar.
Returning warriors sweep the hills between;
The fatal gun has called them to the scene.
Blazing resentment fires their warlike blood,
They've passed their dwellings and enraged pursued.
And mark the hunter whom their wrath o'ertakes
For on his head a storm in fury breaks.
Sir Maxey's band their loud pursuers hear,
And spurring forward leave them on the rear;
For Saville wheeling each his headlong steed,
They dash through forests with defiant speed.
The raging warriors reach the bloody scene,
See Nanawawa lifeless on the green,
A moment pause and scan the mournful place,
Still, crafty vengeance darkening in each face,
The way the band went, narrowly then in view,
And all another route at once pursue.
But one tall form his further flight restrains;
Lo! over Nanawawa one remains —
The White Loon bends, and presses the pale cheek,
And trembling lips that can no longer speak;
While from his eyes the streams of sorrow start,
And downward pours the anguish of his manly heart.

As some wild fretful stream that surges hoarse,
And chafes and struggles in its zig-zag course
Through tangled roots and under ragged stones,
And over foamy cat'racts makes its moans,
Till headlong down the mountain's steepy sides,
The smoother current unobstructed glides;
Flows ev'ner as it meets the level main,
And sweeps along towards the open plain;
So now the pluming bands their numbers drew,
In fretful streams the pathless forests thro'.
This way and that, low crouched, they galloped on,
Stood list'ning here and there a hight upon;
Moved down in level flight beyond the glade,
And glided into silent ambuscade;
And in the branchy covert pond'ring lay
Beside the coming hunter's thoughtless way.
As hungry cougars in the deep morass,
To seize on unsuspecting herds that pass,
Lie close and closer as their prey draws nigh,
Glance at each other with impatient eye,
And press the eager moments as they fly;
So watch these cougars of the wilderness,
And so the moment of assault they press.
With envious haste their barb'rous knives they clasp,
And poise their tom'hawks in a deadly grasp,
And leaning forward on their ponies wait,
Like eagles on their pinions. Coming straight
Along the gorge the hunter's chatting trot
All unsuspecting; till the fatal spot
They reach, when out from stilly ambush nigh,
The yelling furies forth upon them fly.
Once from the tangling branches fairly freed,
Wild retribution fledges savage speed,
Straight on the band like thunder bolts they wheel,
And thro' their vitals plunge the reeky steel
Swift as their iron strength the fatal blows can deal.

All save Sir Maxey, perish; he again
Rides through the storm like lightning to the plain,
Drives up his speed and sweeps the level main:
So when fierce eagle shoots along the skies,
Breaks thro' thick ambient clouds and downward flies,
Above the landscape swings his open sail,
And hangs in stately triumph o'er the vale —
Forward he leans at each successive bound,
As on and on he thunders o'er the ground.
Hard bears his courser on th' unyielding reins,
Close-howling danger feeds his fiery veins,
Dilates his nostrils, to his knees inclined,
And pours their steamy volumes on the wind.

O'er log, stone, ditch, mound, shrub and brushy heaps,
Away, away he unobstructed sweeps.
In vain the heaving earth beneath him groans,
In vain the rising distance makes her moans,
In vain the wand'ring eye his flight pursues,
In vain the ear his feet receding woos;
Beyond their utmost limits all he shaves,
Drown'd in the rolling depths of dusty waves.

Meanwhile, away behind disheartened not,
The streaming warriors hard pursuing trot.
What tho' the courser leave them like the wind?
His trail they see and him they yet will find.

Five miles or more, from where he took his flight,
Along the summit of a woody height,
Sir Maxey reigns his proud horse to the ground,
And far and near for Rodney looks around.

As a dark cloud that spurns the rising gale,
Athwart it rolls and deepens in the vale,
Pours rolling thunders on the plains below;
When flies the startled rustic from his plow,
So seemed this surging courser as he trode,
With bois'trous hoof and strove to gain the road.

There passing soon along the deep wood-side,
The expert of the wilds, Sir Maxey spied.
A brace of fowls and bleeding doe were strung
Across his gun and o'er his shoulder swung.
Homewards he strode anticipating toast,
Stewed fowl abundant, and savory roast.

"Here! Rodney! Here!" Sir Maxey urgent cries,
The expert pausing, lifts his downward eyes;
Alarm is flashing in his master's face,
With looks inquiring now he mends his pace,
When thus Sir Maxey loud begins to cry:
"Fly for your life! for God's sake, Rodney, fly!
A tribe of Sacs are swarming on my rear
Dreadful to see, but dreadful more to hear!
They'll scalp us all and burn the town I fear."
Towards the town the Champion lifts his eyes,
And on his master fixing, thus replies:
"No! let us meet them; hold your further flight,
Retreat's in order ne'er *before* a fight.
To fly will but reduce our needed strength,
And make resistance feebler, and at length
Expose our village to the storming foe;
Who, if repulsed, will reinforcements show.
As some fierce beast who hears his baying foes,
Upon his sedgy realms begin to close,
With growing rage flies from his hidings dense,
And throws his lordly strength on the defense;
So Rodney, from his cov'ring in the wood,
Flew to the breach, and waiting, *firmly* stood.
Soon he beheld the warriors close at hand,
Him they behold, his movements understand,
Wheel from his rifle, and their flight renew,
All, save two mightiest who their man pursue —
For now Sir Maxey had begun again
His wild flight and was leaving o'er the plain —
These two dismount and turn their ponies loose
And in the woods their vantage places choose,
Peer thro' the thick boughs with a stealthy eye,
Till at his mark one lets an arrow fly.
Thro' flinching branches rings the feathered harm,
And strikes its painful barb in Rodney's arm.
E'en as a bear whom crouching hunter wound,
Tears at the pain, and rages o'er the ground,
Till in the copse the hidden foe he spies,
And on his covert like a fury flies;
So Rodney, when the flinty stroke he feels,
Plucks out the shaft and from his cover wheels;
Rages defiant thro' the sounding wood,
Till near the wary foe his steps intrude.
Quick as some stag, when horns and hounds assail
His secret lair within the leafy vale;
The pluming savage springs upon his feet;
His and bold Rodney's eyes defiant meet.
Each dreads the onset for the glare of death
Warms his foe's eyes, and fury heats his breath.
The chief's arm ne'er by wildest dangers swerved,
And Rodney's by a life of hardships nerved;
With nimble haste their leathern belt's they feel,
And in the sun unsheath their deadly steel.
Each lifted hand its ghastly freight displays,
Each hurried glance the narrow field surveys;
With each, defiance can no farther go,
Unless it walked beyond a prostrate foe.
As two tall beeches shaken by the wind
Approach each other; now with heads inclined,
Now rush away with quick impetuous roar,
And now approach, inclining as before;
So bending to and fro these champions stand,
Until they rush together, hand-to-hand,
Rough as the surge when sounding billows meet
Between the schooners of an anchored fleet.
Each in his left hand holds the other's right.
And struggles o'er the ground in horrid plight;
Now on their knees, now bounding in the air,
And now half-stooped to earth, and groaning there.
Their lips all death-like on their teeth they clench
And grate defiance harsh at each long wrench,
That vainly strives the grasp to disengage,
And in the foe's heart plunge the steely edge.
The savage champion feels his waning strength

"Where shores of sweetest green ascend
And thick boughs o'er the waters bend."

"Not a Man, and yet a Man."— Page 58, lines 19 and 20.

Give away and yielding to his fears, at length
Pours forth three dreadful whoops of wild distress,
That startle all the lonely wilderness.
An answer in the distance soon was heard,
And parting a dense thicket now appeared
A warrior fell, with cautious step and slow,
As when some cougar scents a covered foe.
New life to Rodney! Gracious Heaven save!
A doubled danger doubly nerves the brave!
He frees his knife with desp'rateness of strength,
And in the savage sheaths its deadly length;
And as he lifeless sinks with a loud groan,
Bold Rodney at the other heaves a stone.
Firm on his head the shrieking fragment flies,
The dying warrior rolls his painful eyes,
Sinks on the turf, that whitens with his brains,
And hugs the clod that drinks his flowing veins.

The dauntless hero of the woody waste,
To leave the scene of blood directs his haste;
With gun in hand, surveys his passage well,
And strides along the stream-divided dell;
Arrives in Saville ere the sun goes down;
Explains his wounds, and makes his combat known.
With tongues of praise the village meets her slave,
The women soothe, and cheer him, all the brave.

But now the brake conceals a skulky foe,
And o'er him darkness drops a mantle low
"Ah! Sad mistake!" the fathers of the town
In painful concert mutter up and down
The mournful streets; "Ah me! a fatal freak!
When wisdom yields to folly, valor's weak.
The sober blacksmith threw his hammer down,
And wiped the great drops from a sooty frown,
Sat on his anvil, and with words of steel
Went on to utter what his heart did feel.
And as the sun sank in the hills' embrace,
His sad rays streaming in old Joseph's face,
That vacant looked, a picture made of dread,
That many strong hearts trembled as they read.

"What? Ho!" Sir Maxey shouts with martial air,
"Before a struggle yield not to despair.
For indiscretions valor makes amends,
We hold the means, and God directs the ends.
Fly to your arms, and set a heavy guard,
And coolness keep for strategy prepared.
Have wives and children shut in doors till morn,
And then will danger of his strength be shorn."

The honest cotters hear him with a sigh,
And glance around them with a doubtful eye;
Proceed toward the village church and stand
In dread suspense, a hopeless little band.
Now darkness lowers like a gloomy pall,
The muffled drum proclaims a solemn call,
And lights blown out reposeless courage waits
The signal of the sentry at the gates.
In converse low, the fathers watch in arms,
For night's familiar sounds now seem alarms.
The deep low baying of unusual curs,
Discloses restlessness not wholly theirs,
For honest dogs that stealthiness abhor,
Which doth conceal the steps of savage war.
Hark! List! a war-whoop starts the dismal fen!
A moment hushes, and is heard again.
Hope ends her flight, conjectures disappear,
Attack is certain, and the foe is near.
With noiseless tread the sylvan warrior steals,
(Him darkness in her mantle folds conceals,)
Beneath the very cabin's walls, unseen,
And yet may pass the peering watch between.
When Heav'n responsive to his sally cries,
Shall hideous grow, and shut her sickened eyes,
And from the pitchy womb of darkness born,
Red massacre behold a lurid morn.
Ah! now must valor feel the trying test
That tells the manhood of each throbbing breast.
Escape hath shut her gates upon his eye
And leaves one doomed to conquer or to die.

In age's low'ring look and muffled speech,
The young see trouble, and with sobs beseech
An explanation from the lips which hold
The dreadful secret that cannot be told.
Childhood avoids the magic wand of sleep;
And deepest night essays in vain to steep
The wakeful senses in her drowsy dews;
Close on composure's heels alarm pursues.
In solemn council lean the village sires,
Till hope's last ember on the hearth expires;
Sir Maxey's indiscretions all deplore,
And thus in concert sad their minds explore:
"Our ammunition most in hunting spent,
Our numbers scattered and resistance bent,
To send to Dearborn now for troops remains
The only prospect that our reason gains,
The troops perhaps, by timely warning may,
In mounted march, rescue the sinking day.
But, who will go? Who'll dare these twenty miles,
Of forest peril, night and savage wiles?
Who'll bear the news, when he on foot must go,
For not a horse can 'scape the wary foe!"

The young and valiant called upon to choose
The way to glory or her hights refuse,
In vacant looks this truth leave manifest,
The glory-fires burn in some other's breast.
Then, as a hunter calls his faithful dog,
To dare the treach'rous sands and cross a bog,
Sir Maxey to his bleeding servant cries:
"Say, Rodney, can't you fly to Dearborn? Rise,
Your rifle take, be quick! look sharp! be gone!
Let what you do be well and quickly done."

As some proud rock that angry floods oppose
In all their storm lashed rage, Rodney arose,
Disgust red kindling in his manly face,
Looked on the lords of his unhappy race,
And spoke: "My masters, such your titles are,
Let all irreverence from my thoughts be far;
But I've till now a silent list'ner been,
And have your timid hesitations seen.
And now I ask, with but a servant's claim
To audience, and in a servant's name;
I ask, with what do brave men guard their wives,
Their homes, and children, but with their *own* lives?
With all that your hearts cherish as your own,
With all they know, and all they've ever known,
Exposed to danger, suing you for aid,
I ask, why have you this evasion made?
If I, an alien to your house and hearth,
The ignoble *creature* of a slavish birth,
Am called to take *your* parts, be *well* apprised,
Your conduct is but cowardice disguised.
Had I a single treasure to me dear,
A single home joy bright, or, ever were
I owner of *my* life, my arm I'd bare,
And in defense would death or peril dare;
But none of these, and not a cheer within
My darkened breast, what may I hope to win?
Naught but your praise for mere obedience,
The fame of dogs! Nay! ere I go from hence,
Bring down command and make it a request,
Own me a man, and trust a manly breast;
For be assured, although your slave am I,
He will not cower, who will dare to die;
The gaping wounds I for my master wear,
Already warn me that enough I bear."

Now, Rodney ended, and a mute despair
Fell on his hearers, for he breathed an air,
So foreign to their knowledge of a slave,
With liberty so audaciously brave;
That with the tameness of stupidity,
They on their bosoms leaned their chins, to see
Weak folly tamper with a lion; when
Sir Maxey turned away, nor spoke again.
In hope's wide fields there was no further day,
And now their only star had passed away.
As when besieging clouds surround the hills,
Whose troubled bosoms night with terror fills,
The shepherd trembles in his darkened tent,
To hear the mountains wail and woods lament;
Till lo! upon the brim of vision far
Appears the day led by the morning star;
So quaked these townsmen of St. Vincennes' wood,
Till in their midst fair Dora Maxey stood.
A ray of hope in all their bosoms now,
A day-break on a mountain's darkened brow,
So young and gentle, so serenely wild,
At once a heroine and a lovely child!
The men dispersing with her conqu'ring eyes,
In daring tones to Rodney she replies:
"Brave servant, thou has nobly said and true,
Let valor wear his scars and glory too,
But know that woman by her jealous lords
Unhindered, in her great heart e'er awards
To stalwart manhood, love, esteem and praise,
And glories most in his most daring ways.
By caste's frail grants let those gain hearts who can,
What woman *loves* is manliness in man.
Now she is here, for *her* thy life expose,
And nobler years will thy rewards disclose.
The time now comes this way, when Gratitude
Shall clasp thee to her bosom, and the good
And great, and brave of all the valiant earth
Shall *own*, nay more, delight to own thy worth.
To Dearborn then and spread the dreadful news,
While danger's hights more timid souls refuse."

Now Rodney bow'd his face towards the ground,
Until his bosom this expression found:
"The humble subject of thy will I stand,
For thy request to me is a command,
The which to disobey's the coward's task,
Mine is to *do*, fair one, and yours to ask."

Now Dora's lily-touch with sweetest haste,
Her father's weapons on his servant placed,
And thus the fortunes of the hour decides;
For he, with gun in hand and nimble strides,
The speechless groups of villagers divides,
With cougar caution slowly out proceeds,
And faster goes as further he recedes,
Till passing on deep in the howling night
His footsteps sink, and he is out of sight.

While still suspense with throbbing int'rest waits,
And slow-speeched instances relates
Of howling dangers conquered by the fates;
Of savage bands, when border strength was small,
Beat back from many a forest-cabin's wall,
Of women moulding as their husbands fired,
And children watching where the foe retired;
Fair Dora leaning on her elbow, sate
Within her window, o'er the village gate
That eastward looked towards Dearborn, and prayed
That Rodney be not in the wilds delayed.

CANTO II.

THE FAIR CAPTIVE.

The idle winds at dawn that strayed
Thro' waving depths of forest shade,
The early chirp of waking boughs,
The carol of the mountain brows,
The cataract's brawl afar that broke
The drowsy stillness of the morn,
And eager baying which awoke
Responsive to a lonely horn,
In covert of a distant dell,
On Rodney's ear like omens fell;
For troubled Dearborn he had found
In need of all his garrison;
And now for Saville sadly bound
With pensive steps he hastened on.

Wild, the unbroken landscapes lay
Along his solitary way.
And scarce seen thro' the morning gray;
To right and left against the sky,
The border hills arose on high;
And as upon his view they rose,
And roused their forests from repose,
Soon through the lonely glen and far
Along the rocks whose summits bar
The first approaches of young light,
Now Rodney turns his nimble flight.

Miles off an ample hill upon,
His footsteps met the rising sun.
His eyes as eager as the streaks
That morning dashed along the peaks
In quivering crimson; far away
The nook sequestered did survey,
'Mid which his fated Saville lay.
A faint smoke rose, and slowly curled
In pensive wreaths towards the sky!
And drifting farther off on high,
Like visions of a future world;
Hung thinly on a distant shore
Of indistinctness; floated o'er,
Now dimly seen, — now seen no more.
What apprehensions thrilled him now!
Ah what conjectures knit his brow!
Had Saville just from calm repose
Awakened? Or had pluming foes
Her cheerful homes in ashes lain,
And heaped her sacred hearths with slain?
The dilatory smoke seem'd born
Of plenty's cheer — awakened morn.

Down from the hights his way along,
From rock to rock, till lost among
The lofty woods that sobbed and sighed,
He turned his yet untiring stride;
And from the intervening vale,
Emerged and stood with horror pale.

Coal heaps where homes once stood, and bodies charred,
Of innocence and beauty in the heaps;
Scalped heads from love's keen knowledge even barred,
By savage hands; and then little steeps,
Where wound the village paths to field or wood,
Made red and slippery with blood,
Were sights that filled the hero's painful eyes;
The issue of the night's hostilities.
Ah! how destruction's devastating hand
There fell upon delights! How his eye scanned
With savage glee, the ghastly path he made
Thro' Peace's bow'rs within the western shade!

Lo! now the champion bends his daring brow
And thro' the ruins plods pond'ringly slow;
A sob suppresses, sighing, "Me! ah, me!
O, Dora! my best angel where is she?"

A tiny heel-print leaving, soon he spies,
In which there here and there a torn spray lies;
The way it leads with breathing hushed he views,
And eager as a rolling flood pursues.
Thro' dense shades peering now he threads along,
He gains commanding hills, high woods among.
With fearless steps divides the lowly vale,
And nimble as a hart the rocks doth scale.

Of how he sped for eager miles away;
How strange scenes filled the melancholy day,
Of how the rustle of some waste-fed herd,
How plantive woods that piped and chirped and stirred;
Or how the distant cat'ract's pensive moan
Alarmed or moved him, cannot here be shown;
But on in wild pursuit he ventures still,
And stands at sundown on an oak-brow'd hill,
Till darkness coming on with noiseless tread,
Doth o'er the world her rayless mantle spread.

Not many paces had the night come on
Creeping with sable steps, when still upon
A log sat Rodney in despondent mood;
When, lo! a light approached him in the wood.
"What!" rising cries he, in an undertone,
"Is this which haunts me in these wilds alone?"
And quick aside he noiselessly steals,
To where a denser shade his form conceals;
Soon two old women of the skulky bands,
Mope by with pots of water in their hands,
Torches they bear, upon their way to shine,
In oil steeped, and riven from the pine.
He marks their movements with an eager eye,
Their way pursues, and waits discovery.
So when some mastiff thro' the sleeping folds,
A stranger passing stealthily beholds
He waiting lies, or follows crouching low,
The errand of the visitor to know;
When, if on thieving he shall find him bent
He then shall feel a roaring chastisement.

Lo! where beyond the vale a cliff ascends,
Around whose base an unknown river bends,
A smoking camp the peering watcher spies,
And warlike satisfaction lights his eyes.
Beneath the fire-lit boughs he can behold
The busy squaws swarm'd round by warriors bold.
Then in the rocks, a score of yards away,
He like a crouching lion eyes his prey.
"Oh, Heav'n!" he gasps, and turns his frenzied eyes
From where in hideous hands fair Dora lies,
To raving lusts a fair and tender prize.
The rabble now in high confusion runs,
Their knives the warriors grasp and now their guns.
Claim the fair triumph ere the game decides,
While shouting might the opposing voice derides.
Soon other methods they to conquest choose.
This one or that the sweet young captive woos
With wild expressions of languishing love,
Like demons longing for the light above.
With heated eyes they stare into her face,
Drag her soft bosom in a rough embrace;
Their beads display, their painted head gear show;
Like satyrs gibber, and like monsters blow.
Sweet as the vespers of some plaintive stream,
Or as the sounds in a mid-summer's dream,
Dora lisps something, with her fair hands clasped,
When, "Ah, my God, she prays!" wild Rodney gasped.
The camp fires glare upon her lifted hands,
And on her wrists disclose the bloody bands.
When, in the night, the hero thrusts his form,
Fierce as the lightning arm that strikes the storm.
A stalwart warrior hands the pleading maid,
And drags her roughly thro' the darkling shade,
While to her tender remonstrance replies
A monster's scowl, and laughter mocks her cries.
The fiery watcher scans the dark field o'er,
And finds a smooth way straight his feet before.
Now all his strength he in his poised arm flings,
The impatient moment checks its onward wings;
Till like an eagle dropping from the skies,
Right on the howling band the swift avenger flies.

A flash of steely lightning from his hand,
Strikes down the groaning leader of the band;
Divides his startled comrades, and again
Descending, leaves fair Dora's captor slain.
Her, seizing then within a strong embrace,
Out in the dark he wheels his flying face;
His victims leaves to struggle with surprise,
And like a phantom thro' the forest flies.
She, brave as life, against his bosom lies;
Gasps, "Rodney, is it you, or but a dream!
Oh, have you come! Oh, are things what they seem? "
He speaks not, but, with stalwart tenderness
Her swelling bosom firm on his doth press;
Springs like a stag that flees the eager hound,
And like a whirlwind rustles o'er the ground.
Her locks swim in dishevelled wildness o'er
His shoulders, streaming to his waist or more;
While on and on, strong as a rolling flood,
His sweeping footsteps part the silent wood.

Now low beneath the tangled boughs he leant,
Now thro' the tow'ring upland swifter bent,
And on a hill, where in its gentler sway,
The sky was lighted by the milky way,
He pausing stood, to cast a look around,
And catch, if possible, some warning sound.
But all was still; the wide world was asleep,
Save that a waking night-wind there did creep.
Then Dora, a heroine fair and true,
Cried, "Rodney! Rodney! Ah, I know 'tis you."
"Yes, Dora," lisps the champion, and applies
His bloody knife to loose her painful ties;
When, like a bird that mounts on airy wing,
To dash into the light of joyous spring,
She rose, she fluttered to his strong embrace,
With streams of joy in her upturned face.
Heaven might envy such a scene as this,
Since angels ken no more of perfect bliss
Than, — when disaster and a direful day
Conspire to lead a fair young life away
In captive chains, to red-eyed lusts a prey,—
Is felt by him whose fearless hand rescues,
Tho' howling danger on his path pursues.

Miles further on the twain in converse stand,
Where depth on depth the rayless wastes expand;
Together lean, and on their lone way peer,
Listen, to catch night's voices but hear
Their hearts beat only like the footfalls weird,
That in the lonely breast are always heard.
From gaping wounds much Rodney's strength has flown;
Against a tree he sets his rifle down,
Submits to Nature's all compelling sway,
And there concludes to wait returning day.
His blanket winds his manly form around,
And spreads his weary length along the ground.
"Here, Dora," then he speaks, "rest on my arm,
My life shall stretch between you and all harm;
Your frail and much worn strength some rest must have,
Or you'll escape the foe to find a grave."

No word speaks Dora, but her timid eyes
Survey the spot where her defender lies;
Then as a lamb when prowling wolves appear,
The horned defender of the folds will near,
She 'proaches Rodney; stands in trustful mood
And looks around her in the dismal wood.
Reluctant now, and innocently shy,
She kneels upon her turfy couch close by,
Her hands extend, so delicately white,
In earnest prayer unto the God of Night,
In grace Divine upon her to descend,
And o'er her guardian to in mercy bend.
Then in his bosom nestles with deep sighs
That bring great drops of sadness to his eyes.
"Oh sleep, descend, and seal thy lovely sight!"
Sighed Rodney in his heart; "no harm this night
Can thee befall. And when the op'ning day
Shall lend its light to guide us on our way,
My life shall guard the path before thy feet;
Tho' dangers throng in thick array to meet."

The bending heavens drop a tear and sigh.
Old forest sent'nels spread their shelter nigh,
And night winds burthened with their heavy dews,
Strip off their chillness, and their soft sounds use,
While in deep musings sits the pensive hour
And fills composure's urn in slumber's bower.
Robing the hills in light and beauty, now
A late moon hangs upon yon mountain's brow,
Looks stilly on the world's round sleeping face,
Then veiled in clouds withdraws with queenly grace.
Now Dora wakes from strange and fitful dreams,
The brightest rival of the bright moon's beams.
Soft light between the parting branches steals,
And Rodney's stern, still, manly brow reveals,
In him who slumbers, one can better read
The master passions and the thoughts which lead;
For, then the face, obedient to no call
Of shrewd deceit, shows nothing false at all;
But on the features silent truth doth write
Her plainest letters, in their plainest light.
Thus, sighing, looked the fair young frontier maid
Into the sleeper's manful face, and said:
"What deep marks there hath hardship's plowshare laid?
Reserve how manly there! What self-control!
What resolution! Ah a man of soul!"
Then, as some bird that hails the bloom-crowned spring,
O'er sunny meadows spreads its wayward wing,
And joyous flits where all the woodlands sing;
Dora, as wayward, lifts her lovely mouth,
Sweet as the dewy blossoms of the South;
On Rodney's forehead parts the tangled hair,

And gently leaves affection's impress there.
He wakes; and straightway Dora whispers:
"Look;
How yonder moon lights up this lonely nook
With silver glory! Could I but forget
Dear Saville, and the scenes that haunt me yet,
Rapt fancy here would build a wild retreat,
And gladly linger in her forest seat."
Then Rodney, rising: "Day is almost here,
For now the Seven Stars do disappear;
So, think not, Dora, o'er the past to brood;
For loneliness abhors a theme of blood;
The day may o'er your sorrows brightness fling;
The saddest winter hath a joyous Spring.
Hope on, for this sweet dream I had to-night;
I stood high on a farm-surrounded hight,
Where fruitful hills rose round the even view,
Not indistinct, but robed in charming blue.
There, sober herds in peaceful order strayed,
And tinkling folds enliven'd the evening shade.
Now I reclining on my elbow leant,
To sweet winds list'ning as they came and went,
When, o'er me bending, ere I saw from where,
An angel stood in golden waves of hair
Half drowned. Regarding me with care, she drew
Towards me, pressed my brow, and upwards flew."
Then spake the angel of the hero's dream:
"Surely some happy token that doth seem,
And, could we but unveil the mystery,
And now discover the vast yet to be,
Some future bliss we both in it might see."
And with evasive sweetness now she turns
To where the mournful waste, her Saville's ashes urns.

Much she relates, and he attentive hears,
Sometimes with groans and sometimes almost tears.
The waiting town in deep suspense she shows,
While break and fen are howling with her foes.
With heavy countenance and long drawn sighs,
The villagers go forth with down-cast eyes;
The women weep, and pray, and tear their hair,
And raise a storm of turbulent despair.
Children and women now are barred in doors,
Outside, the heavy footed tumult roars,
And loud is heard the bloody-handed fray.
The townsmen struggle, but are swept away.
Out in the storm the screaming children fly,
And frantic mothers follow them or try,
But this on Rodney's soul doth saddest stay:
Dora is dragged a captive in the wilds away.

Fair Dora ended here, and Rodney rose,
Walked from the boughs that did their rest enclose,
And said: "Let's journey; yonder comes the morn;
See! how the mountains laugh the night to scorn!
And hand in hand they meet the opening day,
As on to Dearborn Rodney leads the way.

CANTO III.

FORT DEARBORN.

Fort Dearborn is a strong and goodly place,
And on the frontier guards a valiant race,
And greets the hostile tread of savage harm,
With tongue of thunder and an iron arm.
Far up it stands, on a commanding ground,
With grizzly turrets rising high around;
Block houses rude protect the outer posts,
Where sentries pass before the camping hosts.

Here, erst, as eagle drives the trembling dove
O'er meadows broad, to shelt'ring cliffs above;
Proud Black Hawk rose, stern monarch of the wood,
The red Napoleon of Solitude,
And drove young civilization from the West,
To fly and hover in Fort Dearborn's breast;
Till peace returning, with a gentle hand,
Went forth again to plant the flow'ry land.

Long since the Nation's valiant arm had cleared
Her skirts of border outrages; and reared
By daring hands, the settler's cabin stood,
By every stream and in the mighty wood;
Since labor found in plenty's arms repose —
This strong avenger of his race arose;
And vindicating, or for woe or weal
The red-man's homes, unsheathed the battle steel,
And made the foe his bloody logic feel.

He saw 'neath mammon's desecrating tread
The turf-green dwellings of his sacred dead.
The forest sachem, and the honored sire,
No more, within their homes awoke the fire
Of burning council in the savage breast;
His sun had sunk forever in the West.

His native streams to him with sadness mourned,
His fleet canoe was from its moorings turned,
His squaws and children bade their fields adieu,
To starving on an unknown way pursue;
And armed aggression followed where they flew.
Oh! who can then approach the chieftain's shade,
With aught but honor, e'en tho' he was made
To tear his heart from ev'ry tend'rer tie,
And to loved ones with hostile succor fly?
Great hero, peace! Thou and thy thousand braves,
Too weak to stand, too proud to e'er be slaves,
On valor's lips, shall to the list'ning years
Be told: and urned in woman's love and tears,
Thy name to time's remote end carried down,
Shall treasured be and claimed by high Renown.
Young morn returning from his Eastern tour,
Along the mountains chased a dainty show'r;
The vap'rous slumbers of the valleys broke,
And to the fields her sweetest greeting spoke.
Then, in a gate that looked from Dearborn West,
Sir Maxey stood, and thus his soul exprest:
"My Dora! Oh, my Dora! Where is she?
Torn from my care, oh God how can it be!
To pine away in desert wastes and die,
Or feed the lusts that fire the savage eye.
My only Dora! Would I ne'er had been;
Or that I never had my daughter seen!
Oh, my life's flower, doomed to droop and faint,
Where ling'ring exile mocks thy sad complaint!
Bereavements had poured out my grief in full
And gave me sorrow from a ghastly skull;
When from my side, the one who shared my cares,
Thy mother, helpmeet of so many years—
Was borne away, my home to light no more!
E'en then Hope whispered of a sainted shore.
But tongueless sits Despair now plumed with dole,
And strikes her painful beak into my soul!
When something to my sad heart seems to say,
"'Thy Dora pines in Forest wilds away.'"

Two captains who upon their steeds had sate,
And heard him thus lamenting in the gate;
Now putting spurs, together eager cry:
"Withhold thy woeful 'plaint, where chivalry
Will test its strength. Say to us, aye, oh Sire,
And we, rescue her ere the day expire."

"Aye," cries Sir Maxey, "hear a father's vows;
Who rescues Dora, hath her for a spouse,
And purse of gold besides. Now, Westward fly,
And haste thy search, for we have this surety,
Of him, the only one who 'scaped the foe,
Her captors on a Westward way did go."

Swift as the shadows of a flying cloud,
From Dearborn forth now rode the soldiers proud;
But ere their morn of glory had begun,
High in their sky, appeared a brighter sun.
Rodney came leading Dora from the wood,
And in their presence like a vision stood.

They reined their steeds, they made a martial bow;
On Rodney gazed, awed by his valiant brow;
Glanced then at Dora, and together sighed:
"Whose she shall be, the future must decide!"
But ere their admiration found a tongue,
She passed from view the spreading trees among.

"My life no more embraces pure delight,"
Sighs one, "With that fair maiden out of sight!"
The other echoes: "My life's joy is o'er,
If I must see that beauty rare no more!"
"But," then the other mourns, "her father vows,
That who rescues her hath her for a spouse!
Then, if the valiant task hath now been done
By yon stern slave, eclipsed must be our sun."
"A slave contend," his friend indignant spoke,
"In love's fair lists, and wear a master's yoke!
A servant dog, a stalwart negro clown,
Unhorse a knight, the queen of love to crown?
Nay, thanks to Jove, the negro's proper sphere,
Is by him willfully abandoned ne'er,
His longings suited to his station are;
For faithfulness he craves a master's care,
And craves no more; he stoops a bashful face
From azure looks and love's white-arm'd embrace.
Born to be ruled, kind nature seals his breast
'Gainst Cupid's darts and Hymen's visions blest.
In him ambition's merest insolence,
And chivalry is brazen impudence."
"Between us then," the other aptly cries,
"The open list of flow'ry conquest lies,
And let the gods award the lovely prize."

Now, Dora turning from the perilous wild,
Ran to a waiting father's long embrace,
And kissed the streams of joy from his face.
Brave Dearborn shouted o'er the rescued child,

And loud rejoicings from the cannon's throat,
Rolled o'er the wastes and shook the hills remote.
Round after round the cheering bugles sung,
Old Solitude for once had found a tongue,
And spoke responsive her retreats among.
All day the eyes of pleasure sparkled bright,
Around the evening hearth the news gave light;
The hand of valor, beauty's fair hand shook,
And joy beamed forth in age's sober look.
The tragic fate of Saville hindered not,
So much was sorrow in their mirth forgot.

THE SLAVE PEN.

Lo! where yon gloomy walls ascend on high;
Whose dismal windows meet the passing eye,
Where Memphis rises in her steepled pride,
And gazes on the Mississippi's tide;
Where Memphis, robed in glitt'ring wealth doth rise,
The boast of Tennessee, the pride of Southern skies.
Turn there thy steps, thou who hast wandered long
Thro' life's sad ways, and by the haunts of song;
Thou who hast heard of mammon hardened souls,
Who drank their pleasures from enchanted bowls;
Thou who hast heard of Slavery's grinding car,
Mounted by Crime, and dragged by fiends of war;
And followed by gaunt Famine whose grim hand
Compels submission from a trembling land;
Turn there thy tread. Thou who hast heard or read
Of virtue chained to lust's infamous bed;
Pause at the door! The keeper comes! Ah! I hear
His footsteps on the stony floor draw near!
The harsh key grates, bolts move oppressed I feel,
The prison opens wide its gate of steel;
And in the Hell of Slavery aghast I reel.

Among the sable inmates now I wend
My way, and they in fervent aspect bend
Their faces in the dust, cry, "Massa!" "Lord!"
But their sorrowful eyes speak more than cry or word.
They fain would kiss their keeper's smiting hand,
Pursue his way, or round him suppliant stand.
Ah! Christian, canst thou bear it? Turn thine eyes
To where yon sorrow burdened mother lies!
She upward looks; her bitter anguish, see!
Say to her, "Woman, oh what aileth thee?"
And thou shalt hear through tears the answer sad,
"They've sold away the only child I had;
Her eyes were bright, and blue as Summer's skies!
And oh, my sweet faced darling!" loud she cries,
"My babe! My dear, when only two years old
Was from my bosom torn away by cold
And cruel hands — oh how I hear her cry —
And she without a mother's care must die!
Behold that mother, Christian, she is hushed
By her stern keeper's glance, e'en though her heart is crushed.
And round her see hoar age from friendship torn,
And from the goodly scenes where he was born!
Burdened with grief, he leans toward the grave,
And drags his chains, a poor unpitied slave.
This is the slave pen, ah! this is the place
Where boasting Slav'ry drives the sable race,
To wait, as trembling sheep the slaughter wait,
Their buyer's entrance at yon iron gate!
Here tender hands of tearful remonstrance,
Entreating age's humble upward glance,
The bitter outbursts of the grief torn heart,
The infant's cry, from parent arms apart,
The maniac's wail and gaunt armed hunger's sigh,
That e'en might fill with tears a demon's eye
Cannot in man's cold heart, awaken sympathy!

Ah, Tennessee, hast thou a Hermitage,
Where dwel'st a laureled hero and a sage?
Great sage! Proud leader of the daring band,
Who loosed red havoc on a trembling land
At Blount's poor fort, till hardy sea-worn tars,
With crime acquainted, and athirst for wars,
Withdrew with heads hung from the scenes of blood,
Or e'er the mangled inmates weeping stood!
Let silence set her seal upon thy mouth,
And hush thy boasts, Oh! vain Chivalric South!
Thou may'st forget that from their brake-bound seat,

As brave, true hearts, as e'er with freedom beat,
Were dragged in chains to pine, by Slavery's laws,
Or chased by bloodhounds, from whose gaping jaws
Dropped human gore, to stain the sacred soil
That bloomed with cheer beneath their honest toil!
Thou may'st forget, in a repentant soul,
The wigwams of the wasted Seminole;
And to the world's great temple, and the shrine
Of freedom bring thy offerings divine.
But God is just, and time will surely tell,
That truth and justice in the earth shall dwell

Lo! where yon whirling to and fro
Of men in business tide, doth so
Intoxicate with eagerness;
There in the swirl of voices hear,
The hoarse cry of the auctioneer!
"Agoing! going!" rises clear,
While crowds of anxious list'ners press,
And doubt and curse, and rave and guess;
The speculator in the face
Of business looks: his quick eyes trace
The way of vantage, and he'll make
A fortune, or a fortune break.
Suspense with trembling speech is heard,
For now the crier, word by word,
Sinks lower, lower, "going, gone,"
The bargain's closed, the work is done;
And now he calls another one.
There, rising as the wave-dashed rock,
Firm in his tow'ring scorn;
There, standing on the buyer's block,
See that sad form, but not forlorn;
In other climes was he not born?
Yes, where the Western forests spread
Their green luxuriance o'er the head
Of honest labor, and the sound
Of rural sports, the long year round,
Is heard along the rustic's way;
He once hath known a better day.
There where industry with strong arms
Hath in the forests hewn out farms,
And in the vale his pastures spread,
And flocks upon the mountains
Full harvests reaped upon the hills,
And in the valleys built his mills;
There, once he mingled, true and brave,
A home-guard loved, and faithful slave.
'Tis Saville's Rodney, Dora's friend,
A faithful servant to the end.
And do you ask why he is sold?
I answer, then you shall behold.

CANTO IV.

IN THE HOUSE OF THE AYLORS.

Where Summer crowns with orange blooms
The land of pines and cypress glooms;
We wander forth by field and lane,
In woody shades with plaintive strain.
Ye lonely bayous catch the sound!
Ye languid fen-brakes pass it round;
Ye pensive hills your silence break,
And let the mournful echo wake!
Of errant Pride's chivalric deeds,
Of frowning Caste's unholy creeds,
And their worse sin-begotten heir,
Black Slavery, a lay I bring,
And of *her* painted crimes shall sing.

When Satan hurled out from the skies,
O'er this terrene his fallen eyes
In search of ruin hotly cast,
Hell-bound, and harm-bent to the last;
Those shores of ours, where Mexic's Sea
Holds watch with the Atlantic, he
Touched not in his tremendous flight;
For, stooping there, the sons of light
He spied encamped in battle form
Around a captive ocean storm,
From which his equinoctial bent,
Wheeled short, and further northward went.

Sweet land! conceived in chivalry,
Brought forth in wild adventure, reared
In conquest's arms, to rivalry
And old ambitions long endeared!
The fairest of thy sister train,
And fairer than thy mother Spain,
Thou art of all the world, a lone,
Lone beauty of the fragrant zone.
Thy sisters in their lurid North
Surpass in wealth but not in worth;
More native grace hast thou than they,
Less wrathful winds and winters gray.
Thou hast no somber-low'ring skies,
In which the white-winged tempest flies;
When shiv'ring woods and fields bewail,
Their cheerless and forlorn state,
All riven by the angry gale,
Like beggars howling at your gate.

But such thy Northern sisters know,
Amid their sullen wastes of snow,
And hills as cheerless as the tomb,
And silent plains of leaden gloom.
But girdled in thy summer zone,
As a maid who waits her lover,
Or to meet him walks alone
Under twilight's dewy cover,
Thou dost always meet each year,
Ever smiling, never drear.
And can it be, that thou, sun-girdled land,
Could foster slavery with a jealous hand?
Yea, when less comely States had seen the stain,
Of crimson guilt upon their garments plain,
They shook the galling traffic from the clutch
Of commerce, and forbade her further such.
But thou, when banished Slavery left the North,
In wretchedness and shame to wander forth,
A heartless strumpet, seeking e'en a shed,
Thou then did'st take her in and share thy bed!
Of him whose valor first inspired our strain,
A slave to Aylor bound we sing again.
The shady woodlands of his native West,
To him are not: in richer verdure drest,
A fairer aspect Florida presents,
But not more pleasure; that which most contents
A noble mind, the liberty to dare,
And act the man, he now no more can share.
To him what are luxuriant verdure's sweets,
And cypress shades, and orange-bloom'd retreats;
When for once dear delights his heart now hopeless beats?
Lo! where yon hedge-bound fields beyond the way,
Wave on the view exuberantly gay,
Exulting in their flow'ry excellence,
And holding in their green embrace, a dense
Deep grove of sturdy pines whose solemn shade,
Has o'er delicious seats a curtain made;
There stood the Aylor house, when in its prime,
A brave old structure of that princely time,
When rank and title held unquestioned sway,
And humble worth to family pride gave way.
How often have some, turning to its bowers,
In dreams sat down and wasted pleasant hours.
How often traced its various changing scenes
Of blossom'd fields, bright lanes, and rolling greens!
This goodly mansion hath an olden fame,
And memories that urn full many a name
In honors bright and not a few in shame.
Here hoary tenants, who in turn await
Their scanty pensions at a master's gate;
These, and full many an ebon patriarch,
Of Afric's humble tribe, who wear the mark
Of bondage, tell in tales of cabin lore,
Sad things that run the eye with pity o'er.
The cabin dance, the banjo and the song,
Are courted yet by Afric's humble throng.
They drown their sorrow in a stream of mirth,
And crush their cares as soon as they find birth,
'Neath dance's heel; and on the banjo string
A theme of hope that forces woe to sing.
But one is there, to them a stranger born,
Whose manly brow the marks of thought adorn,
The low inventions of poor darkened mind,
Can never with the threads of nonsense bind
This mental Sampson; tho' by Slav'ry shorn
Of rightful manhood, weakness he doth scorn.
The abject sons of Afric's injured race,
With cabin sports essay to cheer his face,
But all in vain; their silly means repel,
Instead of please, the one they love so well.
He's with them, but not of them; for the light
Of freedom flashing on him from her hight
Has trained him out of Slav'ry's bounds to ken
The walks that he who treads will long to tread again.

All day he labors, speaking scarce a word;
All night lamenting in yon groves is heard.
His ear no more the torrent's voice shall woo,
In deep shades musing long, or wand'ring thro'.
His winding horn no more shall urge the chase,
Where the deep Wabash doth his woods embrace!
No more the flying stag shall dash the spray,
And bend the hawthorn from his mountain way;
And in the blossom'd fields of yellow sedge,
In thickets brown, or in the briery hedge,
His wary spaniel shall no longer spring,
Nor whirring grouse, nor partridge swift to wing!
His fields are gone! Farewell ye sports of yore!
Ye goodly seats on Mississippi's shore!
And home is gone! All that makes labor sweet—
His hearth is darkened where he once did meet
Bright chirping mirth around hoar comfort's feet.
No loving eye shall on his threshold wait,
No little footfalls meet him in the gate!
No faithful dog shall now to meet him come,
And leap and wag and tongue his welcome home!
Dear Western scenes, a tender last farewell!!

Within thy bow'rs no more shall Rodney dwell!!
Lo, in the cane and cotton far away,
He bends to toil thro' all the sultry day!
And on in life a weary journey takes
Thro' regions where no hope's-light ever breaks.
"Oh, God!" he mourns along the pensive hills,
"The rayless gloom that now my bosom fills!
My *life* ends here! existence tho', may creep
Some further on, while life's ambitions sleep!"

Thus, all night once, alone he sighed,
In lanes and fields and forests wide,
And strolling on, was lost from view,
A deep dense pine shade wand'ring thro'.
There, where a bright stream leaping downward,
Moaned o'er falls and rambled onward, —
Like a waywardness of childhood,
Or a wild dream, — thro' the wildwood,
And within a distant recess
Of the forest's leafy stillness,
Where the deep boughs stoop'd and listened,
And the waters flashed and glistened,
Formed a fountain clear, still, blue, deep,
In whose breast heaved Beauty asleep;
There, while morn was just awaking,
Slumbers from her eye-lids shaking,
And her mountain stillness breaking,
With her first sweet music making;
There, with eyes upon the ground bent,
Yet he onward mourning slow went,
All the waking woods were merry,
But his heavy heart was dreary.
Thus in deepest shades he wandered,
Where this wild strange stream meandered;
Knowing not, in his sad musing
Where he went, blindly not choosing
This or that path, as he went on
With his eyes the ground still bent on,
In his heavy soul he muttered —
These words pensively he uttered:
"Ah! bleak Norway's churl may feel not
To complain against his cold lot,
When he never knew a better;
And the naked son of Afric,
Led about from youth to manhood,
In his desert haunt and wildwood;
By the bloody hand of Traffic,
May not groan to wear a fetter;
But to him whose soul doth cherish
Longings that can never perish,
Who his arms in fetters galling
Feels, while liberty is calling
To her citadel before him,
With her bright skies bending o'er him;
But to him, how hard the fate is!
Ah, to him how dark the state is!
Earth her every pleasure loses
To his eyes, and hope refuses
All attempts to mount on high,
To her dwelling in the sky."
While thus he mourned in his sad plight,
Hard by his way, deep out of sight,
A sudden noisy stir he heard,
Of many a flapping bough and bird.
He upward glanced a hurried eye,
When thro' the parting branches nigh,
Upon the brooklet's other side,
A living beauty, lo he spied!
In native sweetness clothed, she stood
And all her fair proportions viewed
With fawn-like timidness. She deemed
Herself unseen, but watchful seemed
Alone within her soft retreat,
The liquid mirror at her feet
Returned her beauty to her eyes,
Till, warmed with innocent surprise,
She stood admiring. Now her hand,
As graceful as a fairy's wand,
She waved above the prattling stream;
Then gentle as a reaper's dream,
She shook down raven clouds of hair,
In wild confusion on the air
And on the brink an instant stood
A sweet young Eve of womanhood.
In deeper shades she now withdrew,
But Rodney's feasting eyes pursue;
There, half concealed, she looks more fair
And seems alarmed at e'en the air,
That scarcely breathe upon her there.
* * * * * * *
A stolen glance at her fair parts,
Stripped Rodney's bosom to the darts
That Cupid's cunning strength let fly;
He wounded turned his dazzled eye,
He sighed for breath, his bosom held,
To hush its leapings as it swelled;
He shut his eyes to look no more,
But looked, worse wounded than before.
He thought to turn and steal away,
And thought, and thought, but yet did stay.
Her beauty like a rising moon,
Among the clouds uncovered, soon
Appeared as fair as e'er was seen
That lovely orb green hills between.
Then, step by step on tip-toe poise
She stole, and ev'ry little noise
To her had eyes. Back she withdrew
Into the shade, and now in view

Again in all her beauty rose,
And full and clear stood list'ning, close
Upon the brink, where grasses sweet
And blushing flow'rets kissed her feet.
The purling waves that played below,
With am'rous descant in their flow,
With all the music of their speech
The maid to tarry did beseech.
A moment gazing on the flood
In Eve-like innocence she stood,
And watched her perfect image there;
While lost within her flowing hair
Her small hand rambled. She had now
Plunged in the panting stream below;
Had not the sudden thickets stirred.
The breathless maiden, shrinking heard
Some farmer's lad, on errand soon,
Towards her pipe his morning tune.
Quick as the lark, that song-hushed darts,
When her still brush some footstep parts,
She threw on robes and out of sight
Within the thick boughs took her flight.
Rodney pursued, not knowing why,
Tho' oft to turn back he would try.
A power in his feet that drew
Resistless as the wind that blew,
Kept him a going, fast or slow,
And where or how, he did not know.
Glance after glance his dazzled view,
Worse dazzled as the maiden flew
Beyond him, and as on he bent,
He knew not what his bosom meant,
In drinking breath on breath so fast,
And being out of breath at last.
But now his secret pleasure turned;
Ah! in the distance he discerned
His master skipping onward too,
To keep the coy sight on his view.
Then, Rodney turned and stole away,
And toiling, mourned the live long day;
But Mosher Aylor, stern as fate,
Pursued, till thro' the Brentfords' gate
He saw the beauty pass from sight,
Like some sweet vision of the night.
Now Aylor passed a wretched day,
And night's hours went their wingless way.
On all his house he closed his door,
And in a frenzy paced the floor.
With hands behind him clasped he stood,
Or leaning, sat in sullen mood,
And sighed, and groaned, and raved with pain,
And rose and paced the floor again
Till midnight's silence reigned around,
His discontent had reached no bound;
From his vexed sea he saw no shore,
He never had thus felt before.
His wonted bowl for him had lost
Its deep oblivion and crost
By broken dreams, his fevered breast,
Refused the arms of balmy rest.
In this sad plight, a hideous cheer
Before him stood! The haggard seer
Of Aylor's shrine of wickedness,
Has heard the accents of distress,
That broke night's stillness, and has come,
To move the trouble burdensome.
Now Aylor spoke, when him he saw,
On whom he long had looked with awe;
"Here Micah! Micah! Micah! here!
To my complaint, come lend an ear.
This morning as I strolled the wood,
Deep thro' yon cypress solitude;
Where shores of sweetest green ascend,
And thick boughs o'er the waters bend;
Fair as the light, I saw a maid
Unclothe her beauty in the shade.
I never felt a sting so bright:
I ne'er saw such an earthly sight.
Not radiant May with her perfumes,
And songs, and show'rs, and fragrant glooms,
And streams of crystal cheerfulness,
Could vie with her in loveliness,
But, like a bird of gorgeous hue,
She vanished on my starving view!"
"Aye," cries the seer, "no doubt have I,
That the same bird which you saw fly,
Is the fair Creole visiting
At neighbor Brentford's watering.
She is a slave, a waiting maid,
Brought down from New Orleans, 'tis said."
"A slave! a waiting maid! a *queen*
Why don't you say; for ne'er was seen
A fairer cheek of Saxon hue
Nor prouder eye of brilliant blue.
Phoo, pshaw! a slave! a waiting maid!
That light-beam sweet from Heaven strayed?"
The Seer replies: "A slave I know!
And can be bought as I shall show.
Dispel the phantoms of thy brain,
And turn to thy right mind again;
You must be sick!" "No," Aylor cries,
"I'm dead in love!" The seer replies,
"Go pass in rest this far spent night,
And by the time young morn's in sight,
I'll bring the news to set thee right."

Now, Aylor half consoled, adjourned
His thoughts till morn, and then returned

"THE COW BELL."

"When the last of glimmering twilight
O'er behind the forest fell."

"*Drifted Leaves.*"— *Page 88.*

With Micah, to the Brentford seat,
The owners of the maid to meet.

The room was darkened where they met,
And all was quiet, save the fret
Of restless boughs, and whisp'ring leaves,
That mingle o'er the ancient eaves.
Now Aylor speaks, "For gold! for gold!
Aye, you but say she will be sold,
And you shall have your price all told."
Awed by the speaker's fiery eye,
The strangers whisper this reply:
"If her we sell, of this beware,
She must receive your special care,
Not as a slave of low degree,
But as a ward descended free.
And this day's doings, ever keep
From earth a secret hidden deep;
For should the news by any means,
Escape you and reach New Orleans,
And come to our old father's ears,
'Twill grieve away his few frail years.
Know this, he loves Leeona more
Than all his children ten times o'er.
His frailty has a passion grown,
And each day more his love has shown,
Till she has to us all become
The bane of pleasure, hope and home —
The idol of his feeble days,
The object ever of his praise.
Here to this wat'ring near your home,
He with reluctance let her come.
Now from *her* keep the fact concealed,
That she is sold; for if revealed,
She'll pine away, and droop and die,
Or from your house attempt to fly.
By wary speech, the truth we'll mask,
If our aged father ask;
"What had befall'n me? Where's my dear?
Why hast thou left my Ona there?"
This said, they drew aside and spake,
Concerning what price they should take;
And when agreed, they answered bold;
"Three thousand dollars down in gold!"
And Aylor with triumphant eyes,
Threw them their gold and seized his prize.

With trembling hands they count their gains,
In haste divide with heartfelt pains;
For well they know a sister's tears,
And sweat and blood, their purses fill.
Ah! well they know a sister's years,
Must now drag onward at the will
Of him who with a shameless cheek,
To buy the hand of love would seek.
The offspring of a father's crimes,
The bitter fruit of broken vows,
The charming bloom of hapless climes,
The growth of unprotected boughs;
Within the grasp of blighting lust,
A lovely ruin now is thrust.
What tho' a father's heart shall break,
In spite of race Caste, taught to ache,
And yearn thro' age's kinder years,
For those to whom Nature endears!
What tho' he wakes with deepest groans,
What tho' his sleep with anguish moans?
When his first sorrow's bitter blast
By soothing words is guided past,
His law-owned brood will run at last
Their race in peace; tho' doomed by spite,
A sister thro' the stormy night
Of bondage mourn, a sad sad sight.
What tho' his grief shall bow his head,
And while from view all pleasures sink;
He of a Quadroon's injured bed,
In age's twilight stand to think?
What tho' he weep beside her grave?
Society will whisper "Slave!"

His love was wayward, and his wing,
Waved wand'ringly in life's warm Spring.
He saw the Quadroon, and they loved —
He and Leeona's mother, moved
Liked sounds of some wild instrument
Touched by the wind, and sweetly blent
Their lives in lasting pleasurement.
But Dame Caste turned her iron face,
And coldly frowned upon their course;
Drove gentle love from faith's embrace,
With all the heartlessness of force.

'Twas thus by social interest's sullen voice,
Another's hand, was made to be his choice.
And thus it is that many a love has grown,
Where even Christians dare make it known.
Where Hymen oft most gorgeous aspect shows,
From *true love* blossoms not a single rose;
While out in fenceless wastes of Nature spring,
Discovered only in wild wandering,
The purest blooms of love, whose fragrant breath,
Live thro' all life and linger after death.

A sister's life is signed away,
Her brothers can no longer stay
To see her drink the bitter cup,
Which they with sorrows have filled up.

Leeona kisses them good-bye,
Regards them with a tearful eye,
And long entreats them to make known,
Why she must there be left alone.
And then sweet as the fair-eyed dawn,
When light first sparkles on the lawn,
She meekly looked in Aylor's face;
And artless as a timid fawn,
With all of innocence's grace,
She placed a trusting hand in his,
As pure as a white lily is,
And gently followed, till from view
Within the Aylor seat they now withdrew.

Now twilight waned and evening still,
Darkened the vales, while from each hill
Around came soft and lulling sounds.
From just beyond the vision's bounds,
One voice was heard most sweet of all,
But pensive as a late rain's fall
Through Autumn leaves when sad and lone
The fading forests make their moan.
This was Leeona's, poor girl torn
Away from childhood's hopes to mourn.
Aylor, meanwhile in sullen mood,
On his piazza list'ning, stood
Roving thro' mental solitude.
Full well he knew what Ona meant,
By her sad walks, and loud lament,
For he had caused it all.
His overtures of stark deceit,
She'd spurned and fled to this retreat,
To whisper in her Father's ear,
Complaints He ever stoops to hear.
So Aylor in Remorse's thrall,
Walked sullen thro' his ghostly hall,
Within a nook of vine shades went,
And o'er his thoughts in silence bent.
In Ona's heart though sad, there burned
A hatred deep for all his aims;
And his entreaties, he discerned,
Were winds that fanned her proud heart's flames.
Ah! what were Brazil's spicy breath,
Or India's sweet pride,
If life were blighted with a death,
That dying never died?

This night too, Rodney wand'red forth to stroll,
And to the list'ning groves impart his soul.
The vision bright that charmed his wayward dream,
Within this wood, beside the peaceful stream;
Returned when here he lingered. Now her home
To make at Aylor's she a slave had come,
And Rodney knew it not; for by caste barred,
He could not pass where wrong was standing guard.
But love hath ways that are past finding out,
And secret triumphs, that how brought about,
No one can tell. Love hath an open eye,
And watches little signs that others would pass by.

"I saw her here," thought Rodney to himself,
"'Twas here she flitted by coy as an elf,
And in yon boughs her disappearance made,
When wanton sounds disturbed the morning shade.
Could I but tell her. Ah! but fate forbids!
Poor hope can't open there her dazzled lids.
Yet I *did see* her, oh, I saw her here!
And in my dreams she still doth bright appear.
Thank Heav'n there's none too crushed by wrong to see,
And beauty's the beholder's property."
But now his hope thro' darker clouds declines,
And thus within the sounding shade he pines:
"No more to me ere life's short race be run,
Shall e'er arise another happy sun.
How shall I break the vision bright which wounds,
And drive it from my recollection's bound!
Oh, why kind Heaven, plant within my breast,
A blooming sorrow — love begot unrest?
Content to bear tho' let me journey on,
Light yet may break life's dismal waste upon!"
Thus in the cypress gloom, he poured his strain,
And homeward turned his mournful face again.

Eavesdropper winds, on errands from the South,
In elfin sandals and with dewy mouth,
To Rodney came and whispered in his ear,
The broken murmurs of a sweet voice near.
A maiden sat within the fragrant shade,
And to the night this lamentation made:
"This life is all unreal as a dream,
Here woes chase woes, like waves upon a stream.
Oh! back, within the happy past I see
A bow'ry home, where playmates beckon me,
To join the buoyant throngs of childhood's train,
And tread the blossom'd paths of hope again.
But here am I, away from home and friend,
While o'er my way the hights of trouble bend,
Strange bodings haunt my visions in the night,
And day with terrors fills my weary sight.
But, whom I *saw* last eve within this shade,

Methought had by this time another advent made.
A strong companion of a troubled heart,
He seemed; oh, that to him I could impart
My woes; oh, that I could but see him once!"—here
She raised her eyes, and lo! the man was near.
Away she started, frightened from the place,
With red abashment kindling in her face.
Oh, was it real, could all this be true?
Was that Leeona, what must Rodney do?
"Stay, maid!" he cries, "my wounded soul implores,
Stay, fair one, stay! until my tongue explores
The hidden longings of a leaping heart;
Hear what a wounded spirit would impart."
Beyond the fence, and near the spring lawn gate,
Leeona paused, the speaker's steps to wait.
With timid mein, and from the other side,
Now Rodney leans, where blossomed vines divide,
And gathers words with anxious haste to tell,
The blushing beauty that he loves her well.
She answers with a sigh, and turns away,
And with her flowing locks begins to play,
Looks up again to speak and only sighs,
But dazzles with the language of her eyes.
There Rodney leans, her wee shy hand to reach
And press, that he may aid his falt'ring speech.
Her fingers touch him with a conquering thrill,
Her eyes could wound, her dainty touch can kill.
He murmured something, *what*, no mortal knew,
And pressed the gate ajar, and stumbled thro';
And as Leeona turned and skipped away,
He whispered, as she went, "Oh! angel, stay!"
"Oh, moon, speed on thy coming," then he said,
As that orb's light beheld the beauteous maid,
Walk from the boughs beneath the open skies,
And flash around her all-o'erpow'ring eyes.

Now Rodney's soul new realms of pleasure knew,
And Time's face brightened as he onward flew.
All sights to him from sadness now awake,
For him the forests into music break,
Thoughts of Leeona speed the moments by,
And they with pleasure lighten as they fly.

His life was now a dream, in which care lay
Like labor's slumb'rous body, when the day
To night and rest and lulling sounds gives way.
Thus many a day his burden down he threw,
And half the pangs of slav'ry never knew.
And thus it is, love is the charm of life,
Whate'er the station and whate'er the strife.
Where'er we roam, where'er our lot be cast,
In home's sweet shine, or in the raving blast,
Love to the soul a ray of light doth bring,
And scatter pleasures from his hopeful wing.
His advent blesses e'en the slave's poor shed,
And sweetens humblest labor's daily bread.
Without thee Love, what were the shepherd's reed?
Without thy blessings what the flow'ry mead?
From thy rapt fountain patriotism flows,
On thy fair breast man's great ambition grows,
His aspirations looking to the skies,
Where hight on hight great emulations rise.
Tho' fortune smile in some voluptuous land,
Tho' fame weave laurels with a lavish hand,
The homely swain of Scotia's thatch-built shed,
Pines for his frugal meal of milk and oread,
Longs for his oaten tune and herded vales,
His shouting harvests and echoing flails.
And why? because sweet love can make him yearn
For early friendships, and his native bourne.

Some Sylvia charms the rustic's lowly dell,
The water sweetens from his native well,
The hills ennobles on his happy view,
His even plains with fresh delights doth strew;
The rough face brightens of his daily care,
With satisfaction crowns his scanty fare,
Pours pleasures in the lap of lusty toil,
And forces plenty from the stubborn soil.
To him no hills above his own arise,
No vales so pleasant meet his ravished eyes,
And clouds so peaceful no such fair skies.
To him no waters like the bubbly rill,
That murmurs by his cot beneath the hill,
No tune so charming as his highland air,
No flocks so even and no lambs so fair.
To him no land at all, no world besides
The world of love that in his heart abides.
See where the hero drives his way to war,
With Feast or Famine harnessed to his car;
O'er crumbling thrones, his flaming prowess leads
And at his wheels imploring freedom bleeds!
Some Cleopatra names the war-doomed land
And thrusts the torch of battle in his hand.

Night after night our lovers met and parted;
Night after night they grew more loving hearted;
Took moonlight rambles in the secret shade,
Wider and wider their excursions made,
And ev'ry night the longer they delayed.
Oft arm-in-arm, with child-like dalliance they,
And devious eyes, pursue their lonely way,
Or turn aside beneath the arching groves,
In scented nooks to prattle o'er their loves;
Till thro' the drowsy branches sinking bright
A late moon seems to smile and say, "Good night."

Again the shades of night were falling round,
And hill and vale a lulling speech had found,
When lost in bliss, the lovers met the moon,
Beyond their wonted rambles; but there soon
A hidden fury, who had scanned their walks
And drunk the whispers of their loving talks,
Their master who can dare forbid their loves —
Flies on them like a hawk on cooing doves.
Leeona, clasping Rodney, starts and cries,
And Aylor hard to tear her from him tries;
Till Rodney's hand with warning aspect laid
Upon his shoulder, his hot rage allayed.
The shud'ring winds bore Aylor's threats around,
The groves their bosoms hushed to catch the sound,
But Rodney led his loving Ona on,
And with her stood the threshold safe upon.

Now to her room, Leeona mounted slow —
A dim light on her table flick'ring low —
She sat awhile to ponder her sad heart:
A locket, gift from Rodney, took apart
Looked on his picture, held it to her breast,
And with a sad sad heart, she tried to rest.
Her light went out, the room was dark, except
The moon that thro' her lattice faintly crept
And looked into her troubled face, but fair,
That now upturned was beautiful in prayer.
She knew not that her faithful Rodney, near
Beneath her window all her words could hear,
As thus she prayed: "Out of the storm, Oh, Lord!
Thou wilt bring shine to those who trust Thy word!
If draughts of bitter grief must first be ta'en,
Oh! Thou dost fill us with Thy joys again;
Now in whatever land my love may mourn,
Or 'mid whatever trials he sojourn,
Like walls of strength around him, Oh, Thou King
Of saints Thy mighty arms of succor fling!"
Lo! Rodney answers: "O, my Ona, dear,
If thou dost pray I know the Lord will hear!"
Now to her feet the Creole bounds,
On tip-toe to the window steals,
Where blossomed vines her form conceals;
But clank of chains, and bay of bounds,
Stentorian oaths, and raving sounds,
Burst on her ear, and freeze her speech,
Ere yet her words can Rodney reach.

Now thronged about by savage men,
And raving bloodhounds nine or ten,
That howl with rage and gnaw and bay,
Like demons that from Tophet stray,
Rodney with irons loaded she
Must turn away, or bear to see.
But as she turns the hounds appear,
And in their fierce jaws Rodney tear.
Unarmed he falls, with pain he groans,
A gust of loud oaths mocks his moans,
While human monsters gather round,
And fierce dogs drag him o'er the ground,
Till he in cords of hemp is bound.
"Oh, save!" gasped Ona as she, poor
Sweet child, sank swooning on the floor.
A moment there, a corpse she seemed,
As in her face the moonlight streamed;
Then frantic rose and downwards flew,
And on her lover's bosom threw
Her wild sweet form, his strong neck drew
Into her arms, and her cheeks fair
Pressed upon his, and with her streaming hair,
Covered his bleeding shoulders that lay bare.

And this is Slav'ry! this the humane creed,
That stretched a helping hand to Afric's need —
The holy Institution that was bound
To lift the heathen, tho' the Heavens frowned!
Ah! this was what a righteous Nation heard
Pray in her temples, and expound the Word.
This was Creation's good Samaritan,
And poor old Afric was the thief-torn man.
Oh, who has not the dear old shepherd seen,
Stand Moses-like, God and His hosts between,
Bless Slavery as a child of Heaven born,
Since Joseph was from poor old Jacob torn;
Watch ever sleepless o'er his peaceful fold,
Unawed by dangers uninduced by gold,
And weep if one poor lamb from shelter cries
That is, one *white* lamb; if black, shut his eyes?

Ah! Young America, for God's sake, pause,
Hast thou such preachers, and hast thou such
laws?

With ruffian hands, the maid was to her room
Forced hurriedly, and shut within its gloom.
Sad as the evening star's last glim'ring ray,
Now from a swoon the sweet girl crept and lay
Half conscious, till the night had far away
Towards the morning sped.
Wild phantoms wandered thro' her fevered
brain,
Sweet slumber from her eyes its flight had ta'en,
And fainting hope had fled;
When in night's silent depths she heard a sound,
As of shy footfalls, that on tip-toe wound
Along the mansion's stairs, now quick and low,
And hesitating now and slow.
Then all was still, save that she heard
Upon the roof light boughs that stirred,
To hold the winds that with them played,
And off in outer stillness strayed.
Again the cautious sounds revived,
And stood there motionless as death,
Till borne upon a husky breath,
This sentence thro' the key-hole blew:
"Git up, my child, Ise cum fur you!"
'Twas "Aunt Ameriky,"—she knew—
She bounded up, she followed fast
Her sable guide who hurried past
Her master's door with breathless ease,
And stood beneath the silent trees.

Then thus, low spake the good old guide,
"In yonder room is Rodney tied,
Where stands a locust on dis side.
De white folks sell him in de morn,
An he'll be left yer shore's yer born,
Go see him gal bid him farwell,
An' tell him what yers got to tell.
An' I'll stand here de outside by,
An' keep watchout wid open eye."
Now near this room—a prison made
In which to keep slaves till conveyed
Into their buyer's custody—
Leeona stole on cautiously.

Where thro' a crevice in the wall,
A late moon lighted up his thrall,
The pale maid saw her lover lie,
And called him with a burning sigh.
He answers: "Ah! is that my dove?"
And she, "Oh, have they bound you, love?"

The ebon angel of the night,
Now flew away and out of sight,
But soon returned with keys in hand
And knife, and giving this command:
"Cum wid me, chile!" unlocked the room,
And entering its sepulchral gloom,
Stooped to her knees upon the floor,
The knotty fast'nings to explore,
Of Rodney's arms; her knife apply,
And loosing him, let Ona fly
With outstretched arms to his embrace,
Lean on his breast and look into his face.

A moment passed, and drinking Ona's sighs,
The proud slave stood, while with his down-
ward eyes
He caught the azure of her tender gaze
And felt his kindling manhood all ablaze.
"Naught have I borne!" he cries, "love, but
for thee,
These bloody tokens of the truth oh, see!
Would I could Northward fly and now be free!
But where thou art not, all is bondage dire.
I'm free in chains, if I but in the fire
Of thy sweet eyes, may feel my heart aspire.
I now could arm, and would at once essay,
The vile destroyer of my joys to slay;
But then the law would drive me from thy sight,
Then day were darkness in my soul's long
night."

Now thus Leeona, gazing in the moon,
"Haste, Rodney, lo, the day will open soon!
Hie to the cave, on yonder side extreme
Of that vast wood, where not the brightest
beam
Of potent noon can thy dark seat invade;
Keep hid by day, by night explore the shade.
There we shall meet. I'll there late rambles
take,
And come to thee. The signal I will make
Is a low song, when there's no danger nigh,
Then we will walk; but hark, a footstep, fly!
Nay, come now dearest to this further shade,
Where our light converse may not be betrayed.
Tread lightly, ah! speak low, for now I fear
Suspicion walks abroad, with open ear
Upon the winds! Haste, Rodney, come away!
Still! there thy heart unburden,—no delay.
List! hush! a hoof, 'tis—no—my beating
heart;
That night bird, hark how lonely! Oh, I start!
For now methinks his note doth omens bring
Of something all my poor heart saddening."

No evening shepherd ever tuned a lay,
Of sweeter accent, down his mountain way
Homeward returning at the close of day,
Than was this speech to Rodney's listening ears,
Till in the hall a sudden step she hears.

His arms once more round Ona Rodney flings,
And sudden freedom to his flight lends wings,
Towards the cave he turns his flying face,
This way and that, and leaps at every pace,
To keep up with imagination's feet,
That brush by him in noiseless retreat.
The cave is reached, and wide apartments found,
With easy access, hollowed in the ground,
And ent'ring slow, now Rodney feels around,
Finds shelves of stone, and seats and beds of stone,
But windows, attics, and piazzas, none.

Meanwhile Leeona, noiseless as a sprite,
Flies through the halls, and up the ancient flight
Back to her room, and softly sinks to rest,
Till morn shall chase the darkness towards the West.
'Mid all the jars that shook the Aylor seat,
And hot suspicions, Rodney's dark retreat
Was ne'er discovered; and Leeona true
As only woman can be, 'scaping thro'
The darkness, met him oft, and took him food,
And gave him comfort in the dismal wood.
Of how she met him, cheered him; noble slave!
And lighted up the dungeon of his cave,
And with him walked thro' moonlight rambles long,
Cannot be painted in our faithful song.
Elijah, fed by ravens, it would seem,
May have thought all the world a holy dream;
And Peter seeing wild beasts in a sheet
Tied up, and angels crying "slay and eat"
May have been awed at his supply of meat.
But what *must* he have thought, who chased by men
And hounds, from human sight into a den,
The angel of his love found coming there,
Him to refresh, and his abode to share?
'Twas midnight, and a round moon stood,
Behind the tow'ring cypress wood
And in her risen glory rolled
Her chariot thro' a field of gold,
A nightingale within the shade,
Her wonted music sweetly made,
When angels witnessed such a sight
As ne'er was dreampt of in the night.
A dark old Priest — he knew no creed, —
A man of God, in holy deed,
A true Apostle to the slave,
At midnight stood in Rodney's cave.
His locks were white and his dark face
Shone with the meekness of his race;
And by him stood his good old wife,
"Ameriky," who all his life,
Had cheered him when his heart was faint,
And shared his ills without complaint.
A pine knot lighted with its blaze,
The silent cave, and in its rays,
The lovely Creole lovlier shone
As Rodney claimed her as his own.
Old Gabriel joined their hands in prayer
And kneeling blessed the union there,
While like an angel of the night,
His wife stood by and held the light.
"What God hath joined together," then
He cried, "among the sons of men
Let none be found to put apart,
For, *one* in mind you're one in *heart*.

Again the nightingale set in,
And with a never-ending din
Of blithest notes, poured out her soul
In sweetness that knew no control.
The rising moon seemed brighter now
Flooding with light the world below;
And night winds thro' the pines that strayed
A wedding march for Rodney played.
Filled with bright stars the midnight sky
Spread out a wide-arched canopy
O'er woods that rose like palace walls
With soft lights streaming through the halls
And in which, all the guests being gone
Majestic silence reigned alone.

FLIGHT OF LEEONA.

In bloom gemm'd depths, where Sylvan branches meet
Above dim aisles that part a still retreat;
Where light as shy is stealing o'er your path,
As some chaste maid unrobing at the bath;
There where majestic palms on high doth tower,
With arbors grand is built the Aylor bower.
Here Ona now a noon excursion made,
And strolled alone along the silent shade.
There, as she went, and could not turn nor stay,
But ling'ringly pursued her flow'ry way,
And gazed into the song-stirred woods beyond,
She stooped to raise a wayside flow'r with fond
And gentle touch, and with a sweet look try
To coax the timid azure from its eye.

And now she turns upon a mossy seat,
Where sings a fern-bound streamlet at her feet,
Where breathes the orange on the swooning air;
And in her queenly pride the rose blooms fair,
There, gazing in the bright waves of the stream:
Her thoughts swim on in a sweet summer's dream.

Soon Mosher Aylor parts this dense retreat,
And finds his slave reclining, fast asleep;
Within the drooping boughs — the very air
Seems with reluctance to breathe on her there!
And water lilies, prattling in the stream,
With speech subdued, enchanted list'ners seem.
Leeona's tresses round her slim waist meet,
The bright waves leap and sigh to kiss her feet,
Her fair breasts and her shapely neck disclose
The lovely hues of young life's freshest rose.

Low Aylor peers the arching shades beneath,
Lust heaves his bosom and compels his breath,
While thus he ponders, on his raving breast,
His hand in trembling indecision prest;
"I'll nearer steal, but then she might awake!
Oh, in these boughs I'll stand, till mine eyes take
Their feast of gaze! Ah! what a beauty she!
My soul is drowning in a boundless sea
Of what I can't express! And she is mine!
My own slave! No, Leeona, no, I'm thine!
I'll be thy slave, and thou my wife — my — no!
There's negro in her veins! 'Twould never do!
No Saxon proud a negro wench could woo,
And let disgrace frown on him? But she's fair!
Her cheeks, how radiant; ah! what eyes — what hair!

Thou angel slave! and mine! I'll nearer steal.
And make her while these boughs shall us conceal.
I'll proffer her a master's secret love,
Protection, freedom or her heart I'll move
To confidence and yielding secresy,
By signals of superiority."
Then as a rough voiced hurricane that finds
The hiding places of the little winds,
Where insect horns their day long music keep,
And starts zephyrus in her noontide sleep;
So, filled with blasty lusts old Aylor goes,
Till on the fair young slave his footsteps close,
And as the meshes of a dream have caught
The waving pinions of her sunny thought,
She hears his steps, sleep blends them with her dream,
Till touch'd she wakes and bounds up with a scream.
Her master's low entreaties make her worse,
She screams for aid, till screaming makes her hoarse.
He grows more furious as she him defies;
The helpless lamb to flee the lion tries
No fear can shake her strength or daunt her soul,
Her senses reel, and fury takes control,
Till from the beast she tears; she flies away
And leaves him threat'ning of another day.

The arbor's deepest bosom saddened seemed,
As innocence's big libations streamed
Fast down Leeona's pity-suing cheeks,
And her poor breaking heart gave vent to shrieks;
And up to sympathizing Heaven she turned
Her tear-dimmed eyes, that with entreaty burned.
Oh, loveliness thou radiant visaged sprite,
Thou lute-voiced warbler wooing to delight!
By prince alike, and homely swain adored,
By every gentleness of soul implored!
When unprotected, howe'er cherished much,
To thee how blighting is the wanton touch!
E'en as the woodside flow'ret plucked away —
Torn from the bosom of its parent May —
Dost droop within the rough grasp of the swain,
Thou witherest to ne'er revive again!
And Slavery, thou worst of all the host
Of human ills! I hate, I loathe, thee most!
Thy name I spurn, thy grov'ling aims I hate,
And all thy bitter creeds abominate;
Yet loveliest daughters to thee hast been born,
Daughters that might a palace hall adorn,
The tender out-growth of unholy deeds,
The bright-hued blossoms of offensive weeds.

'Twas eve in Florida serene and bright,
And gently sighed the wind as sighs a maid
When watching in a full moon's silver light,
Her lover's coming in the trysting shade.
The woods breathed softly, and their even breath
Was sweet with blossoms of the neighb'ring heath.
And, save the lonely note of nightingale,
The churlish out-bursts of the farm boy's vale,
The horn owl's shout, and swamp bird's lone reply,
No evening sound disturbed the sleepy sky.

Now near a dark and solemn wood,
Close by the Aylor house I stood.
The evening star, without a peer,
Was sinking in its mild career,
As sinks the warrior on his shield,
To rest from a victorious field.
Soon, as a maid will half conceal
To show her beauty, then with sighs,
Languishing looks, and yielding eyes,
Will clothe her sex with that appeal,
Which conquers him who dares to feel;
So, bursting from the wood's embrace,
A moon in clouds of silvery grace
Ascended her majestic throne
Of green hills, and serenely shone.

I heard a wail of woman's woe;
Now loud it sounded, and now low,
Suppressed, as if in sudden flow,
A hand had checked its bitter gush;
Then followed an expressive hush,
When, in the mansion's silent hall
I saw a female proud and tall,
Half covered in the myrtle's shade,
Thro' which the moonlight faintly strayed,
Her long hair streamed below her waist
In wild waves; and her bosom chaste
Arose in pensive sweetness bare,
Some monster trouble seemed to dare.
Her eyes with sullen luster blazed,
As up to Heav'n she firmly gazed,
And clasped an infant to her breast,
To gently hush its sweet unrest.
I nearer to the woman stole,
And lo! she was the fair Creole!
For unobserved, I reached the hall,
And leaned against the shadowed wall,
Just as the moon was fairly seen,
Rising high the hills between.

I heard the Creole's softest sighs,
And saw her flash her restless eyes
Upon her rear; I now did know,
She was pursued by some dread foe.
I looked upon her lovely form,
And felt my very blood run warm.
Ah! she was beautiful, tho' not
So fair as lovesick rhymers plot,
Or whining prose mongers array,
Along the novel's little way,
Through which good sense will never pass,
But where the intellectual ass
Delights to roam, or fast or slow,
To see the strange *white lilies* grow,
Or hear a big black giant blow!
Ah! not *so* fair, but a rich rose,
And brilliant as the stream which flows
From Summer hills, with meadows sweet,
And waving cornfields at their feet;
Where flow'ry landscapes farther lie,
Beneath an azure canopy.

But hovered o'er by dark-plumed fears,
Continued wrongs had dried her tears
In their bright depths yet, as a rill,
When Winter on his cheerless hill,
Freezes the surface with his breath,
But cannot stop the flow beneath;
So her proud look of beauty showed
That sorrow's stream beneath it flowed.

Oh! how I wished I knew wherefore
Her wrongs, and her distresses sore!
How then I could have met her foe,
And brought her weal, or shared her woe!
I raised my hands, I strove to speak,
But deep suspense had made me weak;
I could but lisp a single word,
And *that* too faintly to be heard.
Then, ere I caught my reeling sense,
I would have sprung to her defense,
But horror froze my sluggish blood,
And I aghast in silence stood.
There was a whisper in the hall,
And then there came a quick footfall.
Leeona flashed a hurried eye,
And "Oh, *dear* Rodney!" then did cry,
And to his brave arms weeping fly.
A moment clasped in love they stood;
Then he looked round in sullen mood,
As calm as night, but stern as death,
Resentment burning on his breath,
And "fly, Leeona!" quickly gasped,
And warm in his *her* small hand clasp'd.
"They're on us now, and soon we'll be
Beyond the hope of Liberty."

"Hush! Ah! they come! Oh, can't you hear
Their angry footsteps hurrying near?
Wait not a moment to be gone,
By Heaven aided fly alone!
I'll meet, and hold them here at bay,
Or stain with blood their fiendish way."
I strove now but could not withdraw,
Nor look, nor shut my eyes for awe.
A hurried sigh, a sob suppressed,
Escaped Leeona's noble breast.
Now wild as the wild cat'ract moans,

Thro' deep shades and replying stones,
The murmur from her bosom rose:
"God save my Etta from my foes!"
Then on her shoulder swinging straight,
The thoughtless infant's little weight,
Forth from the mansion's hall she stole,
Like hope's last vision from the soul.
Her lips were clenched, her eyes were staid,
Her brow was knit and arched with shade,
To Heaven alone she looked for help,
And fearless as the lion's whelp,
Was winding thro' the silent grove,
With no cheer but the moon above.
Now fast and faster out she flew,
Till indistinctly on the view,
She seemed a shadow, then was seen
No more the darkling trees between.

Now in the dismal mansion roared
A storm of heavy steps that poured
From aisle to aisle, and hall to hall,
As if loud tongues in every wall
Were loosed upon the night to call.
The current foamed towards the door,
From which had flown the Creole poor,
And o'er the voices of the crowd
One great grum throat was heard aloud,
Like a crack'd trumpet fiercely blown,
Or like a wild boar's sally groan:
"Let loose the hounds upon her track,
Go, villains! Speed and bring her back!
Or leave her dead upon her way,
And on her flesh let vultures prey!"

Old Aylor ceased, and his dread form,
Peerless in terror, issued forth
As wrathful as the blackest storm
That ever issued from the North,
To fill the eagle's palace bright,
With thunder pouring clouds at night.
Then grim as some old Indian king,
He strode among the gaping throng
Till like a Champion of the ring
Of loud Olympus, stern and strong,
Of matchless port, and manner proud,
He rose above the gaping crowd
Of men and dogs. He shook his hair,
Dread silence seized the trembling air,
Dumb terror made his minions quake,
Their knees to smite, their fingers shake,
And dogs beneath his nod and scowl,
Began to gnaw their chains and howl.

The chains are loosed, and at a smack
Away fierce yelping fly the pack,
With deep'ning mouths in full chase break,
And dark woods their responses wake;
The very night shades seem to fly,
And dance with terror on the eye;
For dreadful sight is it to see,
A woman from the bloodhound flee,
Then like a lion, when loud dogs invade,
That flies in fury from his roaring shade,
The bristling terrors scatters from his path,
And shakes the forests in his lordly wrath.
So now brave Rodney from the dark hall springs,
And right and left the crowd of hunters flings.
These at him stare with trembling fears oppress;
He plucks a dagger from his fearless breast,
Displays the ghastly menace to their eyes,
And in pursuit of hounds and Creole flies.

Ah! ye whose eyes with pity doth run o'er,
When mournful tales come from a heathen shore,
Of babes by mothers thrown to crocodile;
The scaly terror of the languid Nile:
Of Brahma's car and Islam's wanton rites,
And bloody raids on Zion's sacred hights!
Ye who hear these and pray for God to come,
Behold yon mother fleeing from her home!
A helpless babe upon her frantic breast,
And by a savage master's bloodhounds prest;
And this, too, where in every steepled town,
The crucifix on human wrong looks down!
Think then no more of heathen lands to rave,
While in America there breathes a slave!

Rodney pursues, and where the sickened moon
Looks thro' the woods, comes to Leeona soon.
The angry hounds have overta'en their prey,
And round her, madly mingling surge and bay.
Deep thro' the wastes their fiendish voices ring,
Wild with their tongues, wood, plain and hillock sing;—
And now they close upon her thick around;
Ah! God, they seize, they drag her to the ground!
But Rodney nears; he hears the woman's cries,
Right on the hounds with flashing steel he flies;
They on him furious turn, with eyes that glare
Like furies' fell, jaws gaping, and teeth bare:
This one and that he seizes as they lunge
Upon him and their fangs into him plunge.
Deep thro' their reeking sides his blade he drives

They reel away and empty out their lives;
Till with their hot blood dropping from his hands,
He master of the situation stands!

Ah! ye whose hearts with swifter currents beat,
When fabled gods in equal combat meet,
Shout loud the challenge, swing their shields immense
While armies hang around in dread suspense,
Lift their great lances like the lightnings driven,
Jar all the plain and shake the vault of heaven; —
Behold this hero of the real fight,
This *man* who dares the fury of the night;
Whose fearless bosom, lit with valor's fire,
Withstands the bloodhound in his hateful ire;
Whose faithful heart to love's first impulse true
Will dare to suffer and is brave to do.

Now Rodney listens, his surrounding views,
And thro' the pines his dismal way pursues.
Leeona follows on their journey dark,
Where horn-owls laugh and wary foxes bark;
Till thro' the branches morning rises bright,
With rosy smiles and locks of streaming light.

We wander now in grasses long and damp,
O'er oozy mosses of a dismal swamp,
Thro' languid brakes, and under giant trees,
Thro' whose dark boughs the high *noon* never sees,
Here nature sleeps her long, long torpid nap
In silence, on the Tropic's tangled lap;
Here songless streams with lazy murmurs creep
On slowly, talking in their languid sleep;
Here hideous reptiles in their slimy reign
Crawl aimless ever, and an apish train
Of forest hoodlums day long orgies hold;
And birds, although their plumage gleam with gold,
And divers colors sing not; in this wood,
This habitation of dark solitude.
The weary slaves for life escaping fly
Into the arms of dismal safety.
The scaly monsters of the fens and brakes
Around them here a sure protection makes,
For who would dare the danger of the bogs;
With alligators waiting for their dogs.

Here peace the wand'rers found,
And love about them wound
Her golden cords the tighter;
As fears vanish'd away,
And they from day to day
Felt life's burdens grow lighter.
Ona saw Rodney's manhood, he
Her fortitude and constancy;
Thus, each could in the other see
Enough to keep the loving eye
With pleasures running over.
As Eve and Adam, innocent
Within the charms of Eden went,
And nothing of the wide world knew,
Save that which lay betwixt the two;
So wandered these the wild shade thro',
Lover absorbed in lover.

Far from their place within the wood,
Once Rodney went to search for food,
And ready make, for he next day
Must northward take his dangerous way.
Leeona waiting, sandals knit
Of fibers from the cypress split,
A basket rude of willow wove,
And gathered wild fruits from the grove.
The sun upon his western way,
Had nearly reached the verge of day,
Baptizing in his golden sheen
The lofty groves of cypress green;
When in the swamp grass long and dank,
Leeona reached a bayou's bank.
Lo! all around was strange and lone,
And silence on her dismal throne
Held her dark sway in every nook;
Save that a swamp bird lonely shook
A mournful noise from its wee throat,
That sounded something like a note;
And that its tiny mate did say
Some feeble things anear her way,
Scarce able when it flew to shake a spray.

Leeona turned to scan the wood,
When lo! beyond her scarce a rood,
A horrid human form she viewed!
A tall old man in skins half guised,
Half savage and half civilized;
With a great cudgel in his hand,
Towards her gazing still did stand.
About his waist a leathern thong
Bound his long locks, they were so long, —
Unkempt and matted close they lay,
And age's touch had made them gray.
His gaunt arms were of monstrous length,
The ghastly signs of wasted strength.
"Ah!" Ona sighed, "what shall I do?"

And as she thought, unseen withdrew;
But there the ghostly hermit stalked
Around her hiding-place then walked
Straight in the brush to where she lay
Breathless, and stood right in her way;
Swung his great cudgel round and round,
Chattered and gnashed, and stamped the ground,
Rolled his wild eyes, growled like a bear,
And thrust his fingers in his hair.

A true heroine of the cypress gloom,
Now there to lie, the Creole saw her doom—
A reckless madman had her in his hand—
She sprang up and did at his elbow stand,
And cried out, "Look sir, see my pretty child!"
At this, the raving specter grimly smiled,
Let fall his cudgel, muttered some strange speech,
And for the babe his dreadful claws did reach.
"Have you seen Nanawawa?" then he cried,
"She died long time ago, and then I died;
Who wrongs the red man, wrongs the race of man;
You hurt my wigwam now, sir, if you can!"
Leeona answered, pointing him away,
For no auspicious moment long will stay:
"Your Nanawawa lives in yonder glen,
Make haste and find her—come and tell me then."
Now both hands in his hair the madman threw,
Dashed off and laughed, and gibbered as he flew.
"Dark mystery," Leeona leaving, said,
"Hath in that human waste her mansion made!
Ah! now within his once love-lighted breast,
The wildest phantoms build their broody nest.
And that high seat where wisdom once did dwell,
Is now inhabited by visions fell
And recollections harassing, among
Which, some most dreadful secret holds its tongue!
And 'Nanawawa;' love-balmed name survives—
His mind is dead, but her sweet memory lives!
Poor wretch, unconscious of existence save
With the loved dead, thinks he's beyond the grave!
'Who wrongs the red man.' Why he speaks of *wrongs*,
To that the secret of his life belongs!
Wrongs! Wrongs! Yea, wrongs! Of these I too do know,
The blight and bane of earth, and source of woe!"

Ah! could she but have heard that madman's tale,
Or known the secret of his bitter wail!
Along the Wabash, once there dwelt a race
With whom a wandering white man soon found grace,
A heart-felt welcome to their wigwams found
And heard his proud name, White Loon, shouted round;
He loved the sweetest daughter of the wild,
Young Nanawana, a great chieftain's child,
And when he saw her 'mid her forests slain,
He wandered, and was ne'er himself again.

Now Rodney's voice and nimble footsteps broke,
Upon the Creole's ear as thus he spoke:
"Leeona, here am I! What were those sounds,
And what by you with such startling bounds?
Leeona told him; list'ning still he stood,
Then talking low they slowly left the wood,
Began their steps toward a Northern clime,
And looked on Florida for their last time.

CANTO V.

THE RUNAWAY.

Awake, my muse, yon goodly sights among
The land of Boone and Kenton claims my song.
Thro' other scenes our lovers take their flight,
With hopeful steps to greet our eager sight.
Lo! where yon pleasant valleys meet the eyes,
And goodly hills with stately forests rise!
Here, as we pass, along our cheerful way
Great farms adjoining, stretch in green array.
And great farm houses, looking dense shades thro',
And beauteous orchards fill th' enlarging view,
Thrice hail! proud land, whose genius boasts a Clay!
The Cicero of slavery's palmiest day,
The gifted champion of Compromise,
Whose mien majestic filled a Nation's eyes;
And on the eloquence of whose wise tongue
An august Senate in rapt silence hung;
A Senate, too, whose fame no age impugns,—

Of Websters, Randolphs, Marshals and Calhouns.
And could a land that boasts a mind like this—
That bord'ring on the clime of freedom is—
Suffer a harlot with her whorings vile
To peacefully pollute her gen'rous soil?
Yes, green Kentucky with her native pride,
Proclaiming trust in the great Crucified,
Flaunting her prestige in the wide world's face,
Boasting descent and precedence of race,
And by the greatest of all statesmen led,
Shared the pollutions of a slavish bed.
All o'er her fields, the bloodhound's savage bay
Pressed the poor sable trembling runaway,
And sometimes by the home of Henry Clay!
In all her woods, the wail of wild distress
Was heard, as tattered starving wretchedness
Fled in the shrieking wrath of wintery storm;
Wrapping herself in rags to keep her warm!
Can I forget the tears a parent shed
When her dear hand she placed upon my head,
And me embracing, tremulously said:
"My heart is sick when'er the sad winds blow,
And all the earth is covered deep with snow;
Ah! I remember, when I was a child,
The night was dark, the howling winds were wild,
The wintery earth with spotless snow was white,
When to our door there came a footstep light.
We opened, and a strange black woman's face
Looked in; she held a child in her embrace
And said: "Ize nearly froz to def', Oh wont
You let me in? Oh! don't say *no!* Oh don't!"
She came in, but ere we had said a word,
Her master's voice was in the cabin heard!
She knew the sound, her babe close to her drew,
And back into the night and tempest flew.
The morning came, and weary miles away,
Covered with snow the lifeless mother lay!
But in her arms the babe alive did sleep,
And when discovered, woke but did not weep!
And lo! uncovered to the blushing light,
The mother's face was black—the babe's was white!"

I love Kentucky; tho' she merit scorn
I can't despise the land where I was born.
Her name I cherish, and expect to see
The day when all her sons shall cherish me.
Her sins are black but have in common been
With other sisters' whose sins we have seen.
Yes, I will pray for that good time to come
When I can say: Kentucky is my *home.*
And this I now ask at my country's hand,
If I must die in some far distant land,
Then let my countrymen when I am dead,
Where I was born make my eternal bed.

But here our lovers are again;
Awake, my muse thy wonted strain!
The hounds at day-break struck a trail
In deep Green river's lonely vale,
And thro' the dusk of dewy morn,
Echoed the hunter's rousing horn.
"What is it?" flew from tongue to tongue,
As to his horse each rider sprung.
A moment in their saddles still,
They heard the baying on the hill
Not far away and full well knew
A runaway before them flew.
The chase began, the horses dashed
Away, and thro' the bushes crashed
Like birds that flutter on the wing
All thro' the wild copse scattering.
Each horseman pressing for the lead
Bore on and on with champing speed.
On, on and on, and on, o'er hills,
And winding valleys, leaping rills
And fallen trees like startled hinds,
Wild as a flood, and swift as winds.
The hounds' loud clamor rolled and broke
Morn's drowsy stillness, and awoke
The sleepy hills that answered back
The lusty tonguing of the pack.
Within his quiet farmhouse wood,
The early rustic list'ning stood,
The early plowman in his lane,
Paused, listened, and moved on again;
Surmised, went on, and paused, surmised,
And at the loud hounds stood surprised;
As o'er the fences passing near,
He heard them in their wild career.

The hounds' loud tongues upon the breeze
Now Rodney heard, as if the trees
Were yearning in their sympathy,
And stretched and sighed and whispered "fly."

And fly he did, and as away he sped,
Soon of the pack a length'ning space ahead;
His nimble limbs grown strong by punishment,
Bore manly up as on and on he went,
O'er fences high, and ditches deep he leapt,
Skimmed level fields and thro' the briars crept,

Now pricked by these and now by the wild wanton thorn.
And now by knotty bamboos hung and torn,
His footsteps soon had gained a wooded hight,
Where fields and houses all were out of sight;
He paused to listen, heard his heart's quick beat,
And thought it was the sound of horses' feet.
Another instant and the flying slave,
Was trying if his legs could well behave.
Thro' a strange forest's darkling shades he ran,
Six miles or more from where his flight began,
Sometimes along the wild boar's narrow way,
Sometimes where wolves in midday covert lay.
Ere long he heard the fierce hounds on his rear,
Baying out inbred hate, and closing near.
Loud in the distance angry signals wound,
And furious yells urged on the flying hound.
While oaths were uttered on the morn's still air,
Enough to hush the jungle's roaring lair.

Now Rodney, bursting from the wood,
An instant on the high cliffs stood,
And gazed upon Green river's flood,
That tossed and growled and rolled beneath,
Like torments in the vaults of death.
The rocks look'd down with dizzy awe,
And Rodney leant back as he saw.
Few moments more the worst must bring;
For now the worst had poised its wing!
The hounds are on him! "Save! oh save!"
Right downward leaping cries the slave,
But not into a watery grave!
Through branches tearing as he goes,
He leaves his terror-stricken foes!
With arms of steel he meets the wave,
He grapples with the dizzy tide,
Turns downwards where the cliffs doth hide
Him, then with strokes manful to see,
He pulls for life and liberty.
Meanwhile the hounds have ceased to bay.
The hunters look and turn away,
And "Ah! *he's* drowned!" all join to say.

Three nights or more curtain the skies,
And now we turn our weary eyes
To where the Creole mother flies.
Thro' dangers led by friends at night,
By day concealed from mortal sight,
Thus far, secure has been her flight.

A storm was low'ring, and the sun was low,
The Creole's weary steps were sad and slow,
The air grew sightless, and the fields were still,
The woods were restless on the gloomy hill.
All nature trembles! Lo! the cloud-folds break,
The mountains reel and all their thunders wake,
And fretful lightnings dance on every peak,
With tongues of flame terrific glee to speak,
The startled clouds flee out into the deep
Of troubled night; and headlong down each steep
Rush dizzy torrents from the flood-drenched hills,
And foam along the overflowing rills.
But hark! in all this storm a woman's wail!
A mother's anguish doth the ear assail!
Beneath yon beetling rocks, oh raise thine eyes,
To where Leeona lifts her tender cries!
See now she sinks into the cliff's embrace,
And up to heaven turns her entreating face
In tearful beauty! Hark! for help she cries!
And thunders answer from the wrathful skies!
Between the surges of tumultuous winds,
Her voice a passage thro' the tempest finds.
"Oh God! my child! my child!" she wails distrest,
And clasps the tender sorrow to her breast.
Oh! Heaven, can'st thou thus be pitiless,
And hear, unmoved, the cry of my distress!
Cause thy rebellious winds to war no more,
The loud disturbers of a nightly shore!
Ah! how the torrents now are pouring down!
Must now the whole earth wash away and drown?

The rain has ceased; but the belabored wood
Yet waves and trembles in a troubled mood.
The frantic Creole lifts a piercing cry,
Hoping to rouse some woodsman dwelling nigh;
But in the bluffs above her wolves reply.
"Oh! Heaven," shrinking in the rock she gasps,
And in her arms her infant tighter clasps,
"The wolves are howling, Ah! What shall I do?
Beset by beasts and human monsters too!"
Then like some doe when dogs and horn surround,
That starts, stops, listens, starts with sudden bound,
Flies from her covert, leaps rock, fence and hedge,
And leaves the baying terrors of the sedge;
Right so Leeona stops, and starts, and leaps,

And bounding onward leaves the howling steeps.
The flashing heavens make her footing good
In darksome paths, through the abodeless wood,
As on she flies, a spirit of the night,
But knows not where her heaven-assisted flight.

Day came — an ugly, wet and sluggish day —
When in the woods, far on the Creole's way,
A band of sun-browned cleavers she beheld,
Who, near their lonely homes the forests felled.
Their great rough arms, as rough as oak limbs are,
Dropt on their knees, and to their elbows bare;
Propt up their chins, as from their logs they gazed
Upon the fleeing woman sore amazed.
And when she came to them with tales of woe,
They pressed around her eagerly to know
From whence she was, and whither she would go.
And then they grouped and muttered to themselves,
Smote on their breasts, and seized their pond'rous helves,
And breathing out a gale of oaths and threats,
They led her to their humble forest seats.

Of how the Creole, by these woodsmen's aid,
Her further flight toward Ohio made;
Of how she wandered two long months, beset
By shrewd suspicions, and by mistrust met,
By day concealed, by night hurried along,
Must not prolong the burden of song,
But raise thine eyes to where the verging land
Of Bondage touches Freeeom's holier strand.

Along the cheerless West, deceitful rays
A cold sun kindles to a feeble blaze.
And leafless woods send up their angry howl,
As coming down upon them with a scowl,
The icy Winter, blowing blasts doth stand,
And shake their shrieking tops from hand to hand.

But hark! is that the moaning of a gale —
What sound is that within yon leafless vale?
Draw nearer, listen, now it rises high,
Now lower sinks, recedes, and now comes nigh.
'Tis not the blast of all its mildness shorn?
Ah! no, 'tis poor Leeona that dost mourn!
See where on yonder naked rock she stands,
And holds her tattered garments in her hands;
Scarce able to rescue them from the wind,
That flings them, with her streaming locks behind;
Unwraps her perfect limbs, that white and bare,
Empurple in the bitter Northern air.
From her bare feet blood trickles to the stone!
Ah God! Why is she there? Why thus alone?

Ah! driven e'en from pity's poor embrace
A lone sweet exile of the Creole race!
By heaven forsaken, spurned by the heartless earth,
As if too wicked to deserve a birth;
By native streams no more in peace to rove,
And hear the music of the palmy grove;
No more to gather fruits of luscious growth,
And pluck the sweet flowers of the sunny South!
How can she meet the fierce wrath of the North,
Houseless and clotheless, thus to wander forth?
Ah! Ask you? Turn to where yon hounds pursue,
And circle swift the clam'ring forests thro'.
Hark! how the horns resound upon her rear,
Oh! heaven save her! Is no helper near?
Must she beneath the angry tide be borne,
Or by the savage hounds be seized and torn?

Beyond the river is a fisher's hut,
Close in a cove beneath the forests shut
Beyond the hut a narrow path climbs o'er
The crescent bluffs, and winds along the shore.
Within this hut Ben Guildern sat all day,
Mending his nets and lines, and smoked away.
He dreamed of this wide world and all its cares,
Its hopes and doubts, its pleasures, pains and snares:
Of man's pilgrimage to a better bourne,
Where toil shall rest, and "man shall cease to mourn."
He dreampt of other days and faces gone,
Ere he was left to pass thro' life alone;
Of pleasant tasks his manly arms had wrought,
Of slumbers sweet that toil remitting brought;
And of the many times he climbed that hill,
And found a wife and children waiting still;
And supper smoking, and a ready plate,
When all day's luckless toil had made him late.
"All gone!" within his wave-tossed soul he sighs,
And o'er the waters lifts his tear-dimmed eyes,

"'Twas sunset in the hills along the winding Tennessee."

"*Drifted Leaves.*"— *Page 89.*

"A cold and blustry night the boat went down,
And my poor wife and boys were left to drown!"

Lo! now a signal from the other shore —
A woman beckons him to set her o'er;
He hears the hounds, and not a word is said,
A fugitive he sees imploring aid;
His boat is launched, and from her moorings thrown,
The tide awaits her, rolling up and down,
A moment near the shore she slow doth move,
Awaits another and another shove;
This way and that the swirling flood she ties,
Ventures and darts, and o'er the current flies,—
So when the speedy roe is brought to bay,
Where rising cliffs oppose her woody way,
Within some nook embraced by rocks and logs,
She turns her head upon the bristling dogs,
Bends here and there until her way is clear,
Flies through her foes and leaves them on the rear, —

Seized by the heaving tide, the feath'ry boat
Midway the river down begins to float,
But Guildern with his strong hands grasps the oars,
Plies all his strength, and up the current soars.
The angry billows clamor at his keel
And on his prow in sudden fury wheel,
Till, at an angle of a good degree
Above the hound-pressed Creole pausing, he
Wheels short his flight, athwart the current shaves,
And shoreward glides before the rolling waves.
So when the untiring mistress of the winds
Discovers in the covert feeding hinds,
Midway she meets the current of the skies,
And by its adverse strength succeeds to rise,
Till high above the destined point she swings,
Drops from the clouds and shaves on level wings.
The shore is touched, the Creole boards the boat
With child in arms, and all are now afloat.
Old Guildern speaks not, but plies all his skill,
And looks the firm monition, "now be still."
Leeona's heart with hope and awe is swelled,
She meets an eye that danger never quelled,
A face as rough as wintry hills, but bland,
An arm of massive strength, but gentle hand,
And mien of dreadful soberness, that braves
The sullen fury of the wind and waves.
The boat is now far out into the stream,
And as the quick oars in the low sun gleams —
Rides up and down the wave, and o'er and o'er,
And level swims towards the farther shore.
Ah! nobly bearing up her precious freight,
How steadily she rocks beneath the weight!
Her keel has touched, it cleaves the yellow sand,
Thank God! thank God! they land, they land! they land!

Within a fisher's hut all night,
And leaving by the early light
Of bleak December's lurid morn,
The Creole passes into sight,
Cast down and travel worn.

From naked hills loud shrieked the blast,
And moaned along the empty waste,
And still she trudged along her way,
Beneath a sky of starless gray.

Her infant shivered in the blast,
As houses strange she hurried past,
Where comfort sat with smiling pride,
At labor's genial fireside.
Thus thro' the landscape's wintry scorn,
She forced her steps till weary morn.

The cloads dispersed as night wore on,
And stars from glist'ning fields looked down,
Till late the moon o'er hills arose,
And peerless night unveiled her snows.
Ah! bent and trembling, see that form,
Where shelt'ring rocks oppose the storm,
Chased like a wild beast, with her young
To yawning caves the rocks among;
Her infant in her arms is prest,
Hushed are its cries — it seems to rest.
Where vagrant swine their beds have made
Of leaves and branches from the shade,
The mother stoops to rest its head,
When lo! she starts — her child is dead!
Her wounded bosom feels the dart,
A ghastly sorrow tears her heart —
And fear assails, to leave she tries,
But stays, her babe embraces, cries,
The cold cliffs groan, and night replies.
The gorges murmur at the sound
And farm house curs bay far around.

Beside her babe the mother kneels,
With anguish dumb its cold hand feels;
Its pale cheek against hers is prest,
Her ear is leant upon its breast;
But hope is gone! and kind Heaven hears

Loud grief entreating thro' her tears.
Above the cliffs where winds a country way,
A voice is heard in cautious tones to say:
"Leeona! Oh Leeona! Oh my dear!
Is it my Ona's mournful voice I hear?"
The Creole hushed, afraid to trust her soul,
That felt a heavy burden from it roll,
She clasped her bosom in her wild suspense,
But now distincter heard the voice commence·
"Leeona! Oh, my Ona! are you near?"
The Creole answers, "Rodney, I am here!"
Rodney had heard along Leeona's way,
Of her wild flight, and how pursued all day.
Now down the cliffs in breathless haste he flies,
And clasps his wife, as thus to him she cries:
"Oh! see, dear Rodney; see where baby lies!"

The bosom that had life-long sorrow borne,
The heart which had so long been taught to mourn,
With *real* manly sympathetic heaves,
Bent o'er the corpse and raised it from the leaves.
"Poor harmless comer!" then he gently said,
"Better for thee that thy pure soul has fled
With angel watches to the waiting skies,
Where peace e'er flows, and happier climes arise.
Conceived in trouble and in sorrow born,
Thy life was clouded in its very morn,
And wore along with unpropitious suns;
But to a happy close at last it runs!
Sweet be thy rest upon this lonely shore,
Rocked in the cradle of the winds, no more
To be awakened by sin's tempest roar."
This said, to roll the stone away he stoops,
And in its bed a little grave he scoops;
Commits his tender burden to the ground,
In poor Leeona's last torn apron wound.
She from a mother's anguish pours out cries,
Bends o'er her infant where entombed it lies,
Its calm cheek moistens from her tender eyes,
Its pale lips kisses o'er and o'er and o'er,
And deeper sobs and turns to kiss *once more*
Till Rodney's kindly touch she feels implore;
Then murmurs "good-bye, good-bye, mamma's child,"
And with a loud wail leaves the sorrowing wild.

Here sadness ends,
A new sun lends
His beams to light our way,
And pleasant sights,
And fair delights
Unite to raise our lay.
Where Freedom is what Freedom means,
Our lovers pass to other scenes.

CANTO VI.

SUSSEX VALE, CANADA.

Sweet vale of the Sussex! thou pride of the Queen,
Whose life has a reign of beneficence been;
The flow'r of Britannia's possessions afar
In the cold land that lies beneath the North star.
No slaveholder's foot e'er polluted thy soil,
No slave in thy fields ever bended to toil.
As Bunyan's poor Christian who, fleeing for life,
Left the land of Destruction and children and wife,
And saw as the shadow of Calv'ry he crost,
That his burden rolled down and forever was lost;
So, when the poor fugitive, foot-sore and wan,
From the land of oppressors for liberty ran;
He found that his shackles would crumble and fall,
When he stood in the shadow of proud Montreal.

Asylum, fair Sussex, art thou of the free,
And of all the oppressed, who to thy shades flee
From "the land of the free, and home of the brave" —
Nay! land of the *bound* and the *hell* of the slave.

O, Sussex! dear Sussex! thy scenes I remember
As down thee I wander'd in russet September!
The gay tinted woods in the sunset's gold gleaming,
The brook down thy midst like a sheet of light streaming,
The busy mill near it, and full barns above,
The blithest of children at play in the grove;
The lowing of herds, and the milkmaid calling,
And the tinkling of bells thro' the twilight falling.

And lo! a neat cottage with windows of green,
Scarce through the thick boughs of yon elms is seen!
There now the free lovers, that once were the slave,
The maid of the rice swamp and Rodney the brave,

Are dwelling in wedlock's dear holiest ties,
The objects of comment and pride for all eyes.
The stranger who passes thro' Sussex must hear
On the lips of the cottager far and near,
The *love* of these new comers pointedly told,
And telling it over, it never grows old.

THE LITTLE GREEN COTTAGE.

Canadian farmers came oft to the little green cottage,
To see their new neighbors and hear them tell over their troubles.
The tales of their pilgrimage e'er to their hearers had new charms;
And instances, once told, cloyed not in repeating them over.

Thus it was that farmers, as rough as the oaks in their forests,
But open, and kind, and frank as the brooks in their meadows,
Came oft in the twilight and sat in the door of the cottage,
And said: "We would hear of the land of the poor sable bondman."
And forward they leant, and sat mute as they heard the dark stories
That sully the brightness of America's proudest endeavors.
And regarding Leeona with pity, they sighed: "Lord have mercy;"
As her words, soft and tender, fell on their great hearts with sweet pathos.
With wonder they look'd as they heard of the bayou and cane-brake;
Their breasts smote and murmured to hear of poor fugitive mothers
Chased down by fierce bloodhounds, and dragged from the cypress swamps bleeding.
And their faces flamed red, and they plucked their great beards for resentment,
To hear of slave-holders who bought pure beauty and defiled it;
Blighting the hopes of the sweetest, the fairest, the youngest;
Adorning their harems with flowers all ruined but lovely!
And wringing from hoar age's heart submission to these vile abuses.
But they raised their broad hats, and shouted and stamped with boist'rous gladness,
To hear of Leeona escaping with Rodney her lover.

Thus it was that many an evening Rodney's friends came around him,
And far went the fame of the heroine of the savannas.
The same brave Rodney whose blows were too hard for the savage;
Whose feet were too swift, and whose arms were too strong for the bloodhound,
In his secret heart felt his whole life's fairest triumph
When he saw his Leeona the pride of all the great farmers.
Certain was he in his poverty and humble endeavors;
His bright little cottage, tho' lowly, had its attractions —
Leeona, the womanly model of gentleness lived there.
Not young was she now, and radiant as she was aforetime,
Not thoughtlessly shy and blushing with reluctance so fawn-like,
Her arms were not smooth and round as they once were; her cheeks not so ruddy;
Her eyes were not so brilliant, and playful and winning;
But softened by love, they beamed steadier and overcame more.
They were not the first stars that shine brightly thro' the young twilight,
But the last sober-beaming ones that patiently linger
Above the familiar wood that watches the homes of our childhood.
She was not the bright light that once dazzled and charmed with its brilliance;
But settled and modest, the amiable light of the hearth-stone,
That draws all hearts close around it, and sets all near ones to singing.

The wife of a good man, content to be his and to love him,
Ambitious to rival herself in his strong affections,
And ready always to lay hold with her hands and be happy.
A good wife was she, and loved all who loved her good husband:
And ever was ready to set him in the eyes of her friends
By kindness. Thus was she the idol of Rodney *and* his neighbors.

Not least among those who frequented the little green cottage
Was Father Eppinck, the good priest of the parish of Sussex.
A great and good man was he, and a good shepherd to all true believers.

Were any by poverty shorn of the comforts of this life,
His mantle of care he threw round them, with love warmed.
Were the young gone astray in the dangerous wastes of transgression,
He followed their way, and returned with them prest to his bosom,
Were the old with woes pregnant, and burdened with great tribulations,
He led them, and gently pointed them to a more blessed future.
Thus it was that he came to the home of Leeona and Rodney,
With treasures of kind words. He called them his two loving children,
And always on leaving, he left them his best benediction.
He too loved Leeona, and came to hear of her pilgrimage.

'Twas a balmy afternoon in the joyous vale of the Sussex,
And the voices of Autumn were heard in all of the north land.
The fields were shorn of their harvests, and the golden sheaves were gathered,
And stacked in the barn-yards. The mill complained in the valley,
The distant glen echoed and sang with the music of axes,
And the wain came down from the deep woods groaning beneath its great logs.
The forests wore gay colors, but sighed and were melancholy.
Then father Eppinck, as he sate in the door of the cottage,
Lifted up his eyes and beheld the fair vale of the Sussex.
He saw the sweet tokens of peace that appeared in the heavens;
And he heard the voice of contentment going up from the valley;
The sweet words of plenty he heard, and the loud shouts of strong health;
And then he raised his voice and said: "O my God, I bless Thee!
For the rolling seasons and the full year, I magnify thee!
I thank Thee for the hills and the high rock, and the great forest.
I thank Thee for the pleasant valleys and their full fields of rich grain, —
For their flowing streams, and the burdened orchards on their green banks.
I thank Thee for plenty, for health, and for homes; but, oh my God!
I extol Thee for freedom, the hope of the church of the Savior.
Here peace spreads her white wings, and sun never looks on a bondman.
Here earth yields her increase, and no slave's sweat ever falls upon it.
Oh God, I bless Thee for Canada and the Crown of England!"

When Father Eppinck had finished this saying, with kind words
He turned to Leeona and Rodney and said:
"Now I leave you.
I go up to Montreal by the first coach to-morrow.
If the morning be fair, I hope to be off before the cock crow.
A month shall I be gone, and now that the Autumn is far spent,
My coming to Sussex again will be in the Winter.
What time I am in Montreal, I will be in the house of a merchant,
A good man whose wealth has kept pace with his increasing goodness;
A Christian, whose devotion to Christ and his holy Apostles
In alms deeds is shown. Samaritan-like he goes forward
Into the highways of life, and gathers up the wounded,
And he bears them in his arms to love's inn and cares for them;
And when nakedness cries in the street, he hears her, and helps her,
And asks not: "But why are you naked? Why did you not save in the harvest?"

And his lovely wife, the center of Montreal circles,
A brave hearted, noble, merciful and fair life consort,
Throws around him the arms of encouragement in all his good deeds.

She is happiest always among those that her hands have made happy.
Her heart is a fountain of kind words, and like Aquila of old,
She delights in the church of God, in Christ and his holy Apostles.
Her accomplishments bring after her a train of admirers;
Her beauty a train of worshipers, her charity a host
Of grateful lovers; while her affectionate fidelity
Lights up her home so that her husband says:
"A star is Dora.'"

Now Rodney hung his head when this last word, Dora, fell on his ears;
And as he bade Father Eppinck adieu, he looked up and sighed;
And the light of recollections flashed across his manly face
Like a burst of sun that flashes thro' clouds and falls on a great rock.

ONE SNOWY NIGHT.

The laughter of sleigh bells was heard on the lips of the snow storm
All day long, and passers were scarcely seen thro' the falling flakes
Hurriedly going, wrapped close, and one not speaking to another.
'Twas bitter cold, and the stiffened forests tossed in the northern blast;
And the great old pines, as the gale smote their snowy heads, grumbled,
And seemed in their anguish to mutter: "Let loose our hair and our whiskers!"
The slow wreaths of smoke curled dreamily thro' the still branches
That, burdened with snow, stooped down and were sad-hearted and silent.
All sounds of the barn-yard were hushed in the chill breath of Winter;
The cottage was still, and within doors the cotter kept quiet.

Now nightfall came, and still the flakes were coming down thickly.
"How it snows," said Leeona, as she shut the neat door of her cottage.
Then she drew her chair near Rodney, and sat before a warm fire of logs.
This night the little green cottage was unusually cozy:
The cat on the rug purred low to the slumbering puppy,
Who yelped in a dream, and nipped at the heels of a rabbit.
The light of the fire-place, streaming across the clean hearth,
Glared on the walls, and flashed from the chairs and the tables.

Now thus to her lord spoke the heroine of the Savannas:
"The approach of the Christmas throws the shadows of mirth into Sussex.
Never before was there such buying of presents among us;
Never before such love without dissimulation."

Of a sudden Leeona hushed and fixed her eyes upon Rodney.
"Whoa!" cried a voice at the door, as rough as the oaths of a seaman,—
"Still, Sorrel!" and a sleigh had stopped at the door of the cottage.
Leeona rose up quickly, but Rodney sat still and listened
Till she had opened the door and looked out in the darkness.
A dim lamp in the driver's hand streamed thro' the falling snow-flakes
And discovered two men in the sleigh and one woman.
The men in their great coats wrapped dismounted, and then the woman,
Muffled in heavy furs and veiled stepped down between them;
When the driver reined his horses and dashed away in the silence.
The strangers entered the door and Father Eppinck before them,
And bowing, he said: "These are my friends of whom I spake aforetime."

Rodney arose and stood erect in speechless wonder and silence,
As the tall and lovely form of Dora, the heroine of Saville,
Stood in the midst of the floor of his humble dwelling, and reached
The white hand of recognition, saying, with the sweetness of other days:
"Do mine eyes behold thee, oh Rodney, my dearest benefactor!
I have heard of you here and have come to remove you to Montreal.

My home is a home for you, and the days of your toil are ended."

For the tears of gladness and gratitude the manly hero
Of a thousand trials hard could not speak, but he seized the small hand
Extended, and wept a benediction of tears upon it and kissed it.
His great stern face of noble valor and manhood,
Was now lighted up with a glow exceeding portrayal,
And in its effulgence approaching those who stand in white robes
Ever within the tidal glory of the Throne Eternal.
There were greetings then, and the joy of all hearts was running over;
And their countenances all shone with the light of the Kingdom of Heaven.

CANTO VII.

THE END OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

A tall brave man of gray three score,
The sable columns rode before,
The knightliest of the knightly throng,
The bravest of the brave and strong,
Who on the field of Nashville stood
To meet the splendid hosts of Hood;
When noble Thomas, firm and brave,
Against the armed master threw the former slave.

Rodney had left his home in foreign lands,
And put his life into our country's hands,
His struggling kindred's conquests proud to share,
For he beheld acknowledged manhood there.
And this the grandest day that ever rose
Upon his life, near its eventful close
Was bringing with it recollections sweet,
That made his old heroic heart with youth's emotions beat.

This country's standard stained and battle-torn,
In sable hands o'er fearless borne,
Streamed in the setting sun's deep golden light,
Kindred of Heaven in her blazon bright.
Victorious drums were rolling on his ear;
The bugle's wail was ringing loud and clear,
Thunder of wheels was in the distance roaring,
And into camp the victor hosts were pouring.

Then Rodney saw upon his left and right,
The two sons who had ridden thro' the fight
With him — the two sons that Leeona gave
The country that had spurned her as a slave. —
He saw these sons, and prouder felt than he
Who on the field refused sword of Lee.

This was the day when Southern chivalry
Beheld the negro clothed in liberty,
Step from the shadow of his centuries
Of bondage and dejection; lift his eyes,
And to the verge of august manhood rise. —
The day that *heard* the negro, scarred and maimed,
'Mid sovereign battle's hosts a man proclaimed.

The hosts of Sherman marching to the sea,—
A splendid Nemesis of Liberty;
Swept like a thunder storm that in its wrath
Shakes the dark hills and in its roaring path
Treads mighty forests down. The Nation then
Lifted her hands to Heaven and praised the men
Who fought their way by hard incessant blows,
From where the hills of Cumberland arose,
And at the Northern gate of Slavedom held
Their watch, to where the Mexic Ocean swelled;
Wrenching their victories from brave hands and true

As e'er on foe the steel of battle drew;
The Alpine strength of strongholds beating down,
And sweeping from their path each hostile town.
Then fair applause clapped her white hands and cheered
And bright-faced greetings every where appeared,
Gray bearded gratitude bowed on his knees,
And cheering cities flamed with jubilees.

But soon a change came o'er the Nation's face,
The light of mirth to clouds of fear gave place.
The chiming bells with jubilance that rung,
Now hushed their throats or spoke with doleful tongue.
In mazy dance mirth held her tripping feet,
And music soft suppressed her murmurs sweet;
Sad-faced religion sought the church once more,
And faith went back to do her first works o'er.

The gallant Hood, intrepid Sherman knew
Would sweep the Slaveholder's dominions thro',
So, as that military comet went
To Southward, Hood his swift march North-
ward bent.
The Union struck at proud Rebellion's heart;
Rebellion aimed at her same vital part,
And doubtless had a wound most painful made
Had not the Union's negro arm displayed
Such valiant strength in warding off the blow,
And striking down the fierce and gallant foe.

As Rodney rode to camp this glorious day,
He heard a dying soldier by the way,
Half hidden 'mong his mangled comrades pray.
His tortured soul of ruin conscious cried,
Raved thro' its mansion dark from side to side,
Rose to the eye and stood with dreadful glare,
Ran to the heart, and fluttered, groaning there,
And shuddering in the awful shades of woe,
Sank down in mortal dread and pleaded not to
go.
As hope forever bade her host farewell,
Now mem'ry came into the soul's dark cell,
And told the wrongs of unrepented yore,
Manacled her, and chained her to the floor.
Remorse then followed with the criminal's
scourge,
Her pris'ner seized, and dragged towards the
verge
Of mis'ry bottomless, and in the smoke
Of black torment, that rolled and spread and
broke,
Laid on her lash of scorpions with heavy stroke.

"Oh, Lord!" the sufferer cries, "have mercy
now!
I would pray right, Lord Jesus teach me how!
Ah! I've insulted Thee, I know, I own,
But Savior, make thy boundless mercies known;
Oh, life misspent, could I but now recall!
Leeona, Rodney, ah! forgive me all.
Help! water! water! water, or I die!"
"Who's here?" cries Rodney, quickly turning
by.
The dying man stares on the speaker brave,
In ghastly silence, as the whisper "save!"
Falls from his lips; then like a madman yells,
And rolls his painful balls within their cells.
Rodney forgets the wrongs of other years;
As wretchedness' bitter cry he hears;
The wounds that with their gushing life appeal
To heav'n he sees, and can't his tears conceal.
He kneels upon the ground where Aylor lies,
His canteen to his quiv'ring lips applies,
The sinking soldier in his arms doth rest,
And lean his throbbing head upon his breast.
Now stooping o'er him Rodney hears the cry:
"Rodney, I know, forgive me ere I die!
Leeona tell" — he fixes here his eyes,
And still in death, on Rodney's bosom lies.

And now my countrymen let's bury all
Our blunders here beneath grim battle's pall.
Gathered beneath our flag's heroic folds,
While our dear land all to her bosom holds,
Let us forget the wrongs of blue and grey,
In gazing on the grandeur of the fray.
Now let the vanquished with repentant face
Lean in the victor's merciful embrace,
And let the victor, with his strong arm heal
The bleeding wounds that gape beneath his
steel.
And may no partial hand attempt a lay
Of praise, as due *alone* to blue or grey.
The warrior's wreath may well by both be worn,
For braver foe than either ne'er was born.
They both have marched to deathless victory,
They both have shown heroic misery,
And won the soldier's immortality.
And where your sons their battle lances drew,
Fought not their sable comrades bravely too?
Let Wagner answer 'mid the reeking storm,
That mingles with black heroes Shaw's proud
form.
Ask it of Fisher and a thousand more
Brave fields that answer with their scenes of
gore.
And while America's escutcheon bright,
Is bathed in war-won Freedom's glorious light,
Forget it not, black men were in the fight.
More patriotism Sparta never knew,
A lance more knightly Norman never threw,
More courage never armed the Roman coasts,
With blinder zeal ne'er rode the Moslem hosts,
And ne'er more stubborn stood the Muscovite,
Than stood the hated negro in the fight.

The war was God-sent, for the battle blade,
Around the seething gangrene, Slavery, laid,
By Heaven's arm, this side and that was prest,
Until the galling sore dropt from the Nation's
breast.
War was inevitable, for the crimes
That stained our hands (and in the olden times
Engendered) now were Constitutional,
And spread throughout the Nation's body all.
Deep rooted where the vital currents meet

Around the heart of government, their seat
Evaded Legislation's keenest skill,
Or bent the stoutest edge of human will:
'Twas then that God the raving Nation threw
Upon her own war lance and from her drew,
By accidental providence, a flood
Of old diseases that lurked in her blood.

Whom Moses witnessed 'mid old Sinai's smoke,—
Whose arm from Judah's neck had torn the yoke,
And which had broken Egypt's mighty pride,
And with his chariots strown the Red Sea tide;
Which stripped the golden crimes from Babel's throne,
And made His pow'r to Baal's adorers known,—
He stood among us and His right arm bared
To show His ways by seers of old declared.
While millions trembled at Oppression's nod,
Oppression sank beneath the touch of God.
Line upon line the centuries had wrought,
And precept upon precept vainly taught,
The prophets had of old been heard to cry,
While signs and wonders figured in the sky,
And then the Incarnation of all good,
By Jordan's wave and in the Mount had stood,
And with His hand of gentleness and love
Transcendent, that a heart of stone could move,
Had touched the ties of every human woe,
And loosing fettered mind, said: "Let him go.'
And His great heart to patience ever moved,
And always gentle e'en if He reproved,
Bore this sweet sentence from his sinless Home:
"To preach deliv'rance to the bound I'm come."
But even then, our country shook her head,
Her eagle wings of independence spread,
One tipped with fires of the Tropic's glow,
The other lashing in eternal snow,
And in her pride declared that God's own Son
Had licensed Slavery's dark crimes, every one.
And tho' we shackled Afric's sable hands,
And scourged her where the smoking altar stands,
And tho' we loaded down her captive feet
With iron chains, beneath the mercy seat,
And tho' we laid her virgin bosom bare,
And forced her where the fires of off'ring glare;
We smote our conscience with a palm of ease,
And thanked God that his pure eyes ever sees!
Who then can wonder that the Lord would smite
The haughty neck that did Him thus despite?

Now let us in the light of future years,
Forget our loss and sacrificial tears,
And thank kind heav'n that tho' we erred and strayed,
We to the good path our return have made.

Hail dawning Peace! Speed on thy glorious rise!
And with thy sun unseal the nation's eyes.
Let Islam with the flashing scimitar
Proclaim his rites, and gorge the fangs of war,
But peace be unto thee, land of our sires,
Whose sacred altars flame with holier fires!
Let lawlessness no longer stagger forth
With his destructive torch, nor South nor North;
And let the humblest tenant of the fields,
Secured of what his honest labor yields,
Pursue his calling, ply his daily care,
His home adorn and happy children rear,
Assured that while our flag above him flies,
No lawless hand shall dare molest his joys.

Lo! from yon hights, land of the rising star,
Triumphant Freedom beckons from afar,
And 'mid the glad acclaims of all mankind
Flies her immortal standard on the wind;
Speed there thy steps and lead the glorious train
That swells the lofty tributes of her reign.
Thy hands are wrested from the tyrant's hold,
Thy name on Time's illustrious page enrolled,
And thy escutcheon is embossed with gold.

From Erie's rock-watched shores to Mexic's sands,
No more the bondman wrings his fettered hands;
No more entreaty's sable face thro' tears,
Looks up for succor thro' the weary years;
For Freedom's holy reign is now begun,
And earth rejoices with her rising sun.
Requited toil content to ply his care,
Walks with bold strides as free as heaven's pure air;
His gen'rous fields present an aspect sweet,
And forests blithe the hymns of God repeat.
Dear western woods! thou arbors of the free,
With youthful hearts we wander back to thee,
And ere our numbers hush, once more would lie
Beneath thy shades and gaze upon the sky.
No lordly despot o'er thy ample grounds,
Sways ancient titles and proclaims his bounds;

But each proud tenant *owns* his humble plot,
Tills his own fields, and rears his friendly cot.
And e'en the stranger 'long thy roads may lie,
As peaceful as the brook that bubbles by;
From boughs that hang with plenty gather food,
And live a freeman in the noble wood.
Dear native seats! fit theme for bard or sage,
Still be the joy of venerable age,
While on the summit of his failing years,
The calm of twilight and the end appears.
And where green paths thy solemn shades divide,
Walks buoyant toil with young love at his side,
And charmed by songs that ev'ry zephyr shakes
From boughs around, his hopeful journey takes.
And flaxen children there the live-long day,
In blithe sports join and wander far away.

Oh comrade freemen strike your hands to stand
Like walls of rock and guard our father-land!
Oh guard our homes and institutions free,
The price of blood and valor's legacy.
Awake to watch, ye sovereign sons of toil!
If despot feet e're touch our country's soil,
Fly to the standard that by freemen born,
The glory of a hundred years has worn,
Blood-stained, yet bright, streaming, but battle-torn,
And *rally* till the last drop from the veins
Of free America flows on our plains.
Eternal vigilance must light the tower,
Whose granite strength can bide the evil hour,
Whose wave-dashed base defies the tempest's shock,
Builded upon the everlasting rock.
At last, proud land, let potent wisdom write
Her name above thy brow in glorious light,
And suffer ne'er thy hands to idle rest
Till learning lights thy humblest subject's breast.
In cities tall, and in the hamlet rude,
Suffer no partial hand to e'er exclude
A single child from fair instruction's halls,
But write EQUALITY on all her walls.
An equal chance in life, and even start,
Give every one and let him play his part.
But who could, with complacence on his face,
First bind one's feet, then *challenge* him to race?
I would not own I was a thing so small,
I'd rather own I were no man at all,
Than show that I must some advantage take,
The race of life respectably to make.
Say my facilities must all be *best*,
Then write excelsior upon my crest?
Nay, rather let me weed the hardest row,
And rise above by *toiling* from below.

Free schools, free press, free speech and equal laws,
A common country and a common cause,
Are only worthy of a freeman's boasts—
Are Freedom's *real* and intrinsic costs.
Without these, Freedom is an empty name,
And war-won glory is a glaring shame.
Soon where yon happy future now appears,
Where learning now her glorious temple rears,
Our country's hosts shall round one interest meet,
And her free heart with one proud impulse beat,
One common blood thro' her life's channels flow,
While one great speech her loyal tongue shall know.
And soon, whoever to our land shall come,
Jew, Greek or Goth, he here shall be at home.
Then Ign'rance shall forsake her crooked ways,
And poor old Caste there end her feeble days.

THE END.

DRIFTED LEAVES,

A

COLLECTION OF POEMS.

BY

ALBERY A. WHITMAN.

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1890.

DEDICATION.

TO ONE WHOSE GIANT MANHOOD IN THE GOSPEL WAR, HAS STOOD, IN SIEGE, AND MARCH, AND BATTLE-STORM INVINCIBLE FOR FIFTY YEARS; WHOSE ELOQUENCE HAS HELD THE THOUSANDS THRILLED, AND WHOSE POETIC AND SUBLIME OUTBURSTS OF LOFTY SOUL, HAVE MADE HIM WONDERFUL; ONE WHO HAS EVER BEEN TO ME, A FATHER AND A FRIEND:

THE RT. REV. T. M. D. WARD, D. D.,

"DRIFTED LEAVES," IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY

ALBERY A. WHITMAN.

DRIFTED LEAVES.

MY MOUNTAIN HOME.

[This is the first poem that I ever attempted to write.]

My home was 'mong the mountains blue,
  Close by a friendly stream
Whose mossy banks my childhood knew—
  Whose waves were childhood's dream.

Dear winding brook, I knew it well,
  Its gurgling waterfall,
And silvery bubbles—none can tell
  How oft I think of all!

The old foot-bridge that 'cross it lay,
  On which I oft would sit
And watch the shining minnows play,
  As they swam under it.

The shady glens in which I'd rove
  When bringing up the cows;
And listen to the songs of love
  That floated 'mong the boughs!

Back to thy scenes in mem'ry bright,
  Dear old log house of yore;
My heart still turns with strange delight,
  And I'm at home once more!

THE EAGLE.

I.

Bird of untiring wings,
  Thou sweep'st along the sky:
Scorning the range of meaner things,
  Thou art at home on high.

II.

Or in the blue of heaven,
  A speck high o'er the earth,
Or where the boiling clouds are driven,
  That give the thunders birth;

III.

The upper worlds are thine;
  Thou stoopest to thy rest
Among the crags whose glorious shine,
  No storm can e'er molest.

IV.

Lo! on our standard fair,
  Thy image fitly flies,
About thee only are the stars
  And the blue peaceful skies.

V.

Emblem of Sovereignty,
  In thy unsullied flight,
The hosts of Freedom hail to thee;
  Thou monarch of the hight!

THE DESOLATE MAN.

"Is there anything here for a desolate man—
  Is there anything here I can do?
For I've come a long way and will work if I can,—
  For something to eat; just a mouthful or two."

"Don't look on my rags, for I've seen better days,
But time has dealt hardly with me,
And the courage of youth and my manliest ways
Went down with strong drink, like a rock in the sea."

"No! No!" cried the woman, and she slammed to the door
And nervously caught up her child;
And the winds made a pitiful moan for the poor
And murmured a sorrow across the dark wild.

"Thank heaven," the woman began as she stood
Before the warm coals; "for a home such a night!"
"Oh, God!" wailed the man, as away through the wood
The night winds howled, "is there *no* friendly light?"

From his cloud-shutters peeped the cold Winter morn,
And the rum-seller's wife slept in elegant ease,
While the drunkard lay dead by the snow-covered thorn,
Where the rum-seller's wife had sent him to freeze.

THE COW BELL.

Often to my heart returning
Like an evening's after-glow,
Comes the light of recollection
In a shining overflow —
Thus when I recall from mem'ry
Objects dear to me of yore,
I can hear among the shadows
Of the scenes that are no more,
I can hear the sounds that thrilled me —
Sounds I knew and loved so well —
When the patient cows were lowing,
Lowing homeward in the dell.

When the last of glimmering twilight
O'er behind the forests fell,
And the tree tops growing darker
Filled the silence with a spell,
And the whippoorwill commencing
In the hazel thicket near,
Hushed my childish heart with whispers
Of a superstitious fear;
Then in tones the most assuring
And the friendliest of all,
Came the ringing of the cow-bell,
Ringing homeward in the 'twall.

When I reach the bright forever,
Where 'tis said the angels sing,
I expect to in the somewhere,
Listen for that bell to ring.
For that dear old bell of childhood,
That I heard around my home,
Ere the shadows fell about me,
And the night had fully come;
I shall hear the cattle lowing
Lowing to the milkmaid's call
And shall hear the cowbell ringing.
Ringing homeward in the 'twall.

And if in the great hereafter,
All the music there shall bell
Harps and songs and trumpets only
Sounding on the golden sea,
I shall turn away and wander
From such scenes of ecstacy —
Wander back and watch the twilight
Dying out along the sky;
Watch and listen in the shadows
Till I hear the milkmaid's call,
And shall hear the cowbell ringing;
Ringing homeward in the 'twall.

A LAUGH.

1.

Behold how good it is to laugh,
A rousing, great side-splitting laugh,
That bursts the bands of care in half,
And snaps ennui's fetter;
It breaks the fallow of the mind,
It makes the heart-waste song inclined,
It frees the spring growth there confined,
And leaves one truly better.

2.

I mean a laugh that is a laugh,
A roaring, loud, old-fashioned laugh,
That can of round good nature quaff
A foaming over bumper!

It frees the soul with discords rife,
It straightens out the kinks of strife,
It gives a shoulder-slap to life,
And deals disease a thumper.

3.

I pity him who cannot laugh,
For his poor manhood's lost its staff;
I dread, I *shun* who *will not* laugh,
For he is more a beast, by half,
Than any four-foot creature;
And tho' a sage may frown at this,
A bishop shake his gown at this,
And tho' prude dames look *brown* at this,
I set a good laugh down as *this*—
The wine of human nature.

"THE VETERAN."

1.

Can tongue of angel or of man,
E'er praise the brave old veteran,
As praise we ought;
When in the direst hour of strife
That e'er befell the Nation's life,
He for us fought?

2.

He went into the war to stay,
Not for three months or three years — nay,
But till the foe,
Who would have dragged from height and dome
Our flag of country and of home
Was lying low.

3.

He fought when others went to rear;
He knew no danger, had no fear
In facing death;
But leaving all he loved, he rushed
Through lines of bristling steel, and hushed
The cannon's breath.

4.

Now in the suns of all the seas,
And on the wings of every breeze,
Our commerce flies;
And o'er the plains where once there roamed
The Savage, now, in splendor domed,
Proud cities rise.

5.

To-day, no poor slave drags the chain
That manacles the limb and brain,
But all are free;
And brothers white, with brothers dark,
Kindle the fires of freedom's spark,
From sea to sea.

6.

Thank God! there's freedom in our air,
Our fields, and woods, and every where
For every man;
And while our hearts shall e'er beat free.
Our proud boast shall forever be
— The Veteran!

7.

Fall back and pass the grand old guard,
All worn with age and battle scarred;
— Give them the van.
Now roll the drum; let music ring,
And woman join her voice to sing —
The Veteran!

8.

Let Antietam to Shiloh speak,
And Kenesaw to Lookout's peak,
And Vicksburg thunder in!
A thousand fields now join the din,
Till Richmond fall and crumble in
Her fallen glories, Slavery's sin.

9.

Now bring the dear old battle flags
All stained with blood and torn to rags,
And wave them here,
Till cheer on cheer
Shall reach the heavens, free and clear,
Wide arching o'er the Veteran.

A NIGHT AMONG THE MOUNTAINS OF THE WINDING TENNESSEE.

'Twas sunset in the hills along the winding Tennessee,
And feverish fears of being lost were creeping over me.

The thunders of a coming storm behind the peaks began,
And spears of fretful lightning through the boiling masses ran.

In vain I spurred and looked ahead to see some
friendly light,
The fearful hights receded in the blackness of
the night.

I cried, "hello!" and list'ning stood — and
heard a panther howl,
I turned a startled glance behind and saw the
heavens scowl.

"Hello! hello!" again I cried, — again the pan-
ther screamed,
And then I heard what in the brush a stealthy
footstep seemed.

I started, "stopped" I held my breath! —
"waal," from beyond me came,
"Take keer thar straight, say, aint yer lost?
y-a-a-s! stranger what's yer name."

I told him when he growled; "umph hugh"
and turned and walked before,
Till we had safely passed the cliffs and reached
his cabin door.

My horse was hitched and fed, and we were
soon within the hut,
And while his long, lank wife looked on, mine
host the questions put:

"Whar air you frum! eh? y-a-a-s, whar air yer
gwine? "jes so!" and then,
He shook his head, looked at his wife and turn-
ed to ask again.

A quick tap came upon the door, the landlord
growled, "come in,"
I thought you fellers never wuz er comin back
agin."

There was a sight, the thoughts of which now
chill my very blood,
Four six-foot rough-haired mountaineers be-
fore me grimly stood.

Each had a rifle on his arm and pistols in his
belt,
And oh! my God, what shall I do? my time is
up, I felt.

I glanced towards my saddle-bags, and then to-
wards the door,
A feeling then came over me of going through
the floor.

A den of thieves, a cave of bones by midnight
murd'rers sought,
And unheard shrieks of death, were themes for
my unhappy thought.

But when that cotter's poor repast with heart-
felt welcome spead
We gathered round, and leaning forth he bowed
his honest head.

And spoke the words: "We thank Thee Lord"
in tones the tenderest
That ever told the feelings of a truly thankful
breast.

"An Angel of the Lord" I felt, now ministers
to me,
A wand'rer in the mountains of the winding
Tennessee.

Through cloudless skies the morning rose and
filled the earth with light,
And splendor crowned the forests on the joy-
ous mountain hight.

When down a rugged pathway my good host
went on ahead
To put me on my way again; till turning short
he said:

"Stranger, we'll shake; and lemme say; now
bein as its you;
Don't let us ketch you here again a huntin Rev-
enue."

Jes' take that road before you thar, and ride a
little pert,
An if yer stay away frum here, I guess yer
won' git hurt."

"STONEWALL JACKSON."

BY ALBERY A. WHITMAN.

I.

Defiant in the cannon's mouth,
I see a hero of the South,
Serene and tall;
So like a Stone*wall* in the fray
He stands, that wond'ring legions say,
"*He is a wall.*"

"The old foot bridge that cross it lay,
On which I oft would sit"—
And watch the shining minnows play
As they swam under it.

"Drifted Leaves."—Page 88.

II.

He heedeth not the fierce onsets
From bristling fields of bayonets;
  He heedeth not
The thunder-tread of warring steeds,
But holds his men of daring deeds,
  Right on the spot.

III.

And, is it his insanity?
Nay, this is but the gravity
  Of that vast mind,
That, on his Southland's altar wrought
And forged the bolts of warrior thought,
  Of thunder-kind.

IV.

An eagle eye, a vulture's flight,
A stroke leonine in might;
  The man was formed
For that resolving, deep inert,
Which sprang stupendously alert;
  And, sometimes, *stormed*.

V.

And so, his mount and to the charge,
Or led he columns small or *large*,
  The victor rode;
Till over danger's castle moat,
And in the cannon's silenced throat,
  His charger trode.

VI.

And so, with fierce far speed, or near,
To right and left and on the rear,
  His fury fell
Upon the foe too much to meet,
For Jackson's soul abhorred retreat,
  Except from hell.

VII.

But comes the saddest at the last,
As sad as life's ideal past, —
  And Oh! how sad!
That, in his pride, the Stonewall fell
By hands of those he loved *so* well —
  The best he had.

VIII.

How sad that dark and cruel night
Should fold her mantle on the sight
  Of those tried, true
And valiant men, who followed where
Their leader went, despising fear
  And darkness too!

IX.

But sometimes triumph is sublime
The most when on the brink of time,
  And his was so;
A shady shore beyond he sees,
And asks for rest beneath its trees,
  And *it* was so.

X.

And do you ask; can he whose sweat
Hath clods of weary slave toil wet,
  The praises sing
Of one who fought to forge the chain
That manacles the human brain?
  Do such a thing?

XI.

I answer; yes! if he who fought,
Fought bravely and believed he ought,
  If this can be;
If manhood in the mighty test
Of mankind, does its manliest,
  Believingly.

XII.

Then, poet songs for him shall ring,
And he shall live while poets sing;
  And while he lives,
  And God forgives,
The great peculiar martial star,
In old Virginia's crown of war;
Will be her Stonewall, proud and sad, —
The bravest that she ever had.

WHAT IS IT?

1.

What is it we think
When boblink
On a sunbright morning in May;
Comes out with a tune
That ends all too soon,
And he flies in the depths away?

2.

What is it we feel
When branches conceal
The dove whose complaint we can hear;
What is it we would
When in its dark mood,
A forest stream murmurs by near?

3.

'Tis what we can't tell,
And Ah! we do well
If we can but hold what we've caught
Escaping control
In the depths of soul
And sensitive edges of thought!

4.

'Tis well; for within,
May not the wild din
Of immortal groves ever ring;
And life like a stream
Flow on in a dream
Of the valley of endless Spring!

GENIUS.

1.

Genius finds both extremes,
The bottom and the top;
And 'twixt the two he never seems
To find a place to stop.

2.

But high or low his lot,
Genius is genius still,
And whether man heed at first or not,
He must at last and will.

3.

Though dull-eyed grief and care,
The vandals of the brain,
Should sack and leave Hope's temple bare
And all her children slain;

4.

Though Superstition place
Her thorns upon his brow,
Amid a jeering populace,
And crucify him now:

5.

Genius at last will rise,
Triumphant from the dust;
The cynosure of wondering eyes,
The inevitable *must.*

A QUESTION.

Shall my hand lie cold on the strings of my lyre,
And the heart that is warm lose its pathos and fire,
Ere my countrymen hear my song?
Shall the bard who sang in the tents of the slave,
And now wakes his harp for the free and the brave,
Unheeded wander along?

"WHERE THE YELLOW SUMACS GROW."

[Lines to the memory of my departed mother.]

1.

Come unto me, my children, I will tell you of my mother,
I have often thought to tell you, but have not, some how or other.

2.

'Twas far off in Kentucky, many many years ago:
'Twas in a lowly cabin where the yellow sumacs grow;

3.

'Twas near the dark-wood thickets where I've heard the milking bell,
And found the nests a building in the bushes by the well:

4.

'Twas in this lowly cabin where the yellow sumacs grow,
That what I am to tell you, happened, many years ago.

5.

My mother had been sick so long, our little hearts were sad;
I recollect we gathered flowers, with what poor hopes we had:

6.

But, when we came, we could not speak, but watched the aged nurse;
"Not now, poor t'ings, not now," she sighed, "your mammy's gettin' worse."

7.

"I see a light," my mother gasped, and calmly closed her eyes,
"A river and the Tree of Life, and mansions in the skies."

8.

We wept and called, between our sobs, but now she was asleep,
And on her lips a restful smile forbade us more to weep!

9.

She was not dead, it did but seem that she had gone away;
And left the Image of what was divine impressed on clay!

10.

I've seen the spires ascending, and I've heard the sounding domes
That called their hosts to worship, from their grand palatial homes.

11.

I've heard the deep-toned organ in the dim cathedral's aisle;
And I've seen the priest prolong his rites in sooth, for sinners vile.

12.

But still, still unforgetting, in whatever land I go;
My heart turns to its Mecca, where the yellow sumacs grow.

13.

When doubts and fears oppress me through falling mists of years,
In childhood's recollections, O! that childhood's faith appears!

14.

Undimmed by creeds or dogmas beams our Father's house above;
And that poor lowly cabin is a temple of His love.

15.

In other lands I've wandered, and in others yet may go;
But Heaven's still the nearest where the yellow sumacs grow!

GRANT.

He came to us as coming from afar,
A stranger, without title, friends or clan;
And when he rose to be the guiding star
Of mighty armies, he was still the *man*.

And till mankind shall cease to name the day,
When Appomatox fell and freed the slave;
The lips of patriot, saint and sage shall say:
"He conquered, not to *crush* men, but save."

His end is but the rest from long fatigue;
He camps where peace's sons theirvigil keep;
Nor can your drumming pageants by the league,
Arouse him from her tents in his great sleep.

No coat of arms for him, no name engrossed
On royal parchment, couched in royal cant;
On Freedom's granite shaft, in gold embossed,
Fame writes her proudest title, simply—
"Grant."

LINES ON WATCHING THE STARS.

The stars are out and glorious in the heavens,
Bright host that erstwhile seen from Lebanon's
Far silent top, and mountains round about
Jerusalem, thus sang the shepherd Prince:
"When I behold the heavens that Thou hast made
And firmament which is Thy handiwork;
O! What is man, that Thou shouldst visit him!"
I, too, O God! would hail Thee and adore!
And in yon bright amazing distances,
Would now ascend to the eternal brink;
And 'mid Thine arching splendors join Thy praise!
Hail Sons of Light, Ye sentinels of God,
That build your cold fires on the steeps of heaven!
Tell us the secret of thy watch and guard!
Art thou the Sons of God whose carol woke
The slumberous void at Nature's teeming birth?
Or, heralds jubilantic didst thou sing
When startled night on fiery summits heard
The sky-dividing summons: "Now is born

In Bethlehem, the Christ — the Savior, Lord!"
Amid yon vasty silences around,
What deep communions thou dost seem to hold:
And gaze upon this lonely earth, how still!
Hold, glorious stars! thine upper portals hold
Bright sentinels of the eternal hights,
I yet shall pass thee on my way to God!
Amid a horizon of flaming guards
Whose rolling splendors fill the heaven of heavens.

THE KANSAS TRAVELER.

"Hello! there on the harrow,
Can you tell me the way to Sod Town?
My horse is very much fatigued,
And, see, it is nearing sundown."

"Pardner, your latter remark
Is kee-reck, ya-a-s;
Go four miles east and three miles south.
And please keep off the grass."

"Well, I'll gallop," cried the traveler,
And he galloped thrice a mile,
To where a man was standing
At a "cow-chip" pile.

"Hi yi! Do you reside here?
Is that thing there a dug-out?"
"It looks as if it was dug in, don't it? Ya-a-s,
Are you'er stranger hereabout?"

"Yes, a trav'ler, and I say,
Can you tell me how to go
Four miles east, and three miles south,
And not lose my way?"

"Yes! Well I'll gallop," and he galloped
'Till he stopped
Where a bunch of quiet cattle
The prairie grass cropped.

Now the scene it was entrancing,
There was dimness in the view,
And he felt the weird emotions
That they tell us lovers do;
When the moon is in the shadows,
And a stillness in the air,
Seem to catch itself list'ning
To the vows that whisper there.

And musing thus he fell: —
"Silence in thy spell,
Here would I dwell,
For-e-v-v-r!" but the outrageous notes
Of an acre of coyotes,
In all the keys —
E's, G's, C's, D's, Z's-s-s!
Bursted from the grass around,
Like a string of calliopes
Waking up out of the ground.

Then he galloped! No, he just, that is;
Ge-e whiz-z-z!
That is,
He just got down to his knittin',
And such a gittin' up an' gittin'
Over the hills in the sand draws,
With cold chills agoin' up his back with claws;
He lapped and tumbled in the blue stem, —
And, a-hem!
Did he stop?
Well, you just wait.

His horse kind o' limbered up his gait,
And his ears began to flop,
When a voice in the dark
Cried: "Who's this on a lark,
And such a wild stampede to-night?"
"Oh," cried the traveler sore,
There's a thousand wolves or more
A coming after me with all their might!"

"Pardner have you got back? So?
Ya-a-as, kee-reck, this is Kansas, don't you know!"

The farmer held the bridle at the trembling horse's bit,
And patted him and stroked him 'till he trembled not a whit,
And then he coaxed the young man
To "slide down and be at ease,"
And in a Kansas "dug-out" hold
An interview with fleas."

THE FORTUNES OF WAR.

At morn I saw the youth of sunny hair,
Mounting to rush where veterans might quail,
I saw his lover, angel-eyed and fair,
Buckle his arms and urge him not to fail.
I saw his mother in her loving care,
Bid him "farewell" with quivering lips and pale;

And when he rode and waved adieu! adieu!
My heart's pride into adoration grew.

At eve with sword and boots to saddle bound,
His horse led riderless, went up the street;
While to the bivouac of his last sad mound
The muffled drum the soldier's farewell beat.
Ah! there in tears was a fair lover found,
Refusing comfort at bereavement's feet!
And aged sorrow in her locks of gray,
Followed her child along the mournful way!

A FLOATER.

"The body of an unknown girl was found this morning, floating in the lake. Decomposition was rapidly setting in, and yet her shapely limbs, her sweet innocent face, and her shock of raven hair showed that in life she was uncommonly beautiful. She was taken to the morgue." — *Daily Paper.*

See where yon fishers shorewards float
And pausing peer out from their boat;

Where with slow throbs the idle deep
Breaths like a monster in his sleep.

They grasp thin oars! What can it be
They've found upon the heedless sea.

"A floater!" How her cold eyes stare
Into the realms of empty air!

See how her tresses long and wet,
Float over her like waves of jet!

What secret in her proud young mind,
Hath she withholden from mankind!

What shapely hands! There, let them rest
In innocence upon her breast!

Strong arms are there to lift her now,
And wipe the sea foam from her brow!

And e'en the storm-rough fisher's eye,
Looks tenderly and is not dry!

"A floater?" "that and nothing more!"
Borne off along the sorrowing shore?

Nay city proud! Above thy din
And glare of wealth-protected sin!

Above thy domes that jar the wave
And ring dead beauty from her grave:
A voice shall rise up from the sea
A rueful voice that curseth thee!

And loveliness that is no more
Shall mock thy sons who wrong the poor!

UNCLE SAUL'S RESOLVE.

"Ize gwine back to Georgy, to Georgy Izeer gwine;
For sorrow am er bowin' dis ole gray head of mine.

De music in de tree tops of de winds a goin' thro'
Am to me sad and solemn dat I doan know what to do!

It 'pears to me dat voices, dat I hab heard before,
Am singing wid de angels ober on de other shore!

Ize gwine back to Georgy, an dar I'll make my home,
And dar I'll keep er watchin for to see de Bridegroom come!"

TOBE'S POEM.

HOME TIME — SUNDOWN.

De whippoorwill's er singin' in de dark wood bush,
De bull fraug hollers in de pon',
De katydid's er talkin' in de leaves ob de tree,
An' de darkies am er singin' in de co'n,
An' its home time, sundown,
Time fur ter turn out de hoss;
Home time, sundown,
An' de darky haint got no boss.

De lightnin' bugs er flying wid er zig-zag flame
De beetle bugs er goin' wid er droan;
De 'backer flys er huntin' fur de Jimpson weeds,
And de toad fraug's er hoppin' mighty lone:
An' its home time, sundown,
Time fur ter drive up de cows;
Hometime, sundown,
An' de darkies am er comin' to de house.

Sally Ann's er cookin' ob de hoe cake bread,
De chilluns am er playin in de flo',

De ham meat's er fryin' wid er mighty good smell,
An' it makes de darky smile mighty sho'.
An' it's home time, sundown,
Time fur de heart ter feel lite,
Home time, sundown,
An' de darky bids care good-night.

AUTUMN.

Now Autumn comes; the leaves are sadly falling;
And crisp and dreary winds are hurrying us,
As if an unseen world beyond us calling,
Did wake the voice of Death, forever nigh us;
Now is suspense so deep and so appalling,
That life's least burdens seem to sorely try us,
The mists of melancholy fill the view
And wizard-voiced regrets alas, pursue!

Where love soothes toil in humble life is found
That dream of faith which sees a paradise
And ladder from it to the very ground;
And where the nightingale's sweet notes can rise
Through woody tops some lowly roof around,
The heart is wafted nearest to the skies;
There feelings by the peace which flows induced
Are living waters in the bosom loosed.

AFTER SUNSET.

1.

There's twilight on the hills yet,
I hear the fire-fly's drone;
And oh! this after sunset,
Makes loneliness so lone!

2.

The cows are at the bars met
They low beneath the hill;
And oh! this after sunset
Makes stillness all so still.

AN AUTUMN SCENE.

1.

There's purple on the Sumach leaves,
The fields are all bereft of sheaves,
The grass is crisp and seary:
And in the thorn bush by the fence,
The robin perches to commence
To pipe his farewell dreary.

2.

The bluebird's chirp is wandering,
And seldom heard; for everything
Doth listen now so deafly;
And in the naked tree, the jay
Forgets to meddle, all the day
Consumed in thought, or chiefly.

BELLS OF TIME.

1.

Ring! ring! ring! in thy dusty halls,
O Bells of Time,
Calling the morn of life,
Banging the noon of life,
Tolling the eve of life,
Ring! ring! O bells of Time.

2.

Ring! ring! ring! till earth heed thy calls,
O! Bells of time,
Heralding the birth of years,
Thundering the march of years,
Tolling the dirge of years;
Ring! ring! O bells of Time.

3.

Ring! ring! ring! on earth thy warning falls,
O, Bells of Time!
Ring o'er the former sea,
Ring o'er the after sea
Ring in Eternity,
Ring! Ring! O bells of Time.

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